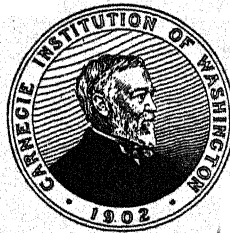


# LYDGATE'S FALL OF PRINCES

EDITED BY  
HENRY BERGEN

PART I.  
(BOOKS I. AND II.)



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# LYDGATE'S FALL OF PRINCES

## PART I.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE, THE METRE, BOCCACCIO'S  
AND LAURENCE'S PREFACES, ETC.

BOOKS I. AND II.



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## ERRATA

- On page 174, line 6172, *patisynge* is a more correct reading than *parysbyng*.
- On page 426, line 3514, for *Lacedemonios*, read *Lacedemonois*.
- On page 815, line 1453, for *impreuable* read *imprenable*.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It was probably not long after May 1431 that Lydgate began his "Fall of Princes,"<sup>1</sup> at the request of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who was lieutenant and warden of England from April 1430 to early January 1432 during the absence of Henry VI. in France.<sup>2</sup> The mention of Gloucester's prowess against heretics (Prologue, 400-413) no doubt refers, as Miss Hammond has suggested,<sup>3</sup> to the suppression of the Lollard risings at Oxford, Salisbury and London in the spring of 1431, and perhaps to Gloucester's presence "at the beheading, at Oxford, of a small band of men led by the bailiff of Abingdon," in May 1431.<sup>4</sup> We do not know the date of the completion of the work, but as Lydgate complains of his age, "more than three score years," in Book VIII. (he was sixty-five in 1436), and was engaged on the "Life of Albon and

<sup>1</sup> There has been confusion in regard to the title of the book: some students write "falls" and others "fall"; one or two have on occasion used both forms. Tottel's title-page seems to have been responsible for the plural, as Wayland printed "tragedies" in his title and "fall" in the heading of the table of contents, and Pynson "fall" (falle) in the titles and colophons of both his editions. Among others who have followed Tottel are Thomas Arnold, Henry Morley, Ten Brink, Koerting, Schick (who prefers "fallés"), A. W. Ward, Courthope, Saintsbury, and Lee (art. Lydgate, Dict. Nat. Biog.). G. Ellis, Hazlitt's Warton, Taine, David Laing, Hortis, MacCracken, Miss Hammond, the Dict. Nat. Biog. (art. Humphrey of Gloucester), and practically all catalogues of MSS., including Ward, have "fall." R. Lane Poole prints "falls" on p. 229 of his edition of Bale, Oxford, 1902, and "fall" on pp. 228 and 231; E. Gordon Duff, "falls" in Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., II. 321, and "fall" elsewhere in his bibliographical works. Earlier writers, such as William Baldwyn (preface to "Mirror of Magistrates," ed. 1563), and Edward Phillips (*Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum*, ed. Brydges, 1800), and Thomas Gray have "fall"; Watt quotes "falls" from Tottel; but Tottel himself printed "fall" in the heading of his table of contents and in the colophon, fol. ccxviii verso. I have used "fall" because there is no doubt that Lydgate himself called his book "The Fall of Princes." He refers directly to it in lines VI. 304 and IX. 3622, and in the same terms to Boccaccio's original, I. 51, 77, 270, 471; III. 133, VI. 231, and to Chaucer's "Monk's Tale" of the same title, I. 249 and IX. 3422. He also used "fall" as a subject of general interest (in reference to the opinions of Andalus di Nigri), III. 174. "Fallys" he uses once as a subject of general interest, IX. 3450, and, so far as I have been able to discover, four times in reference to the the "fallis" of specific princes.

<sup>2</sup> Prologue, 372 ff. <sup>3</sup> *Anglia*, 38. 133-136. <sup>4</sup> *Anglia*, loc. cit.

Amphabel" in 1439, it is quite possible that, as Professor Schick conjectures, it was finished in 1438 or 1439,<sup>1</sup> perhaps before the end of 1438; and there was at least a partial interruption in 1433, while Lydgate was engaged in writing the "Legend of St. Edmund and Fremund" at the command of Abbot William Curteys, during and after a visit of Henry VI. to St. Edmund's Bury, which lasted from Christmas 1432 to Easter 1433.<sup>2</sup>

The "Fall of Princes" consists of 36,365 lines of decasyllabic verse arranged in seven and eight line stanzas,<sup>3</sup> rhyming *ababbcc* (rhyme royal) and *ababbcbc*, and is a paraphrase of *Des Cas des Nobles Hommes et Femmes*, Laurence de Premierfait's second, amplified version in French prose of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*.<sup>4</sup> The original Latin prose work was written by Boccaccio between 1355 and 1360 and dedicated to his friend, the chevalier Mainardo dei Cavalcanti, because "no emperor, king, prince or pope" seemed to him worthy of his regard; and although a revised and somewhat augmented edition was issued at a later date (probably before 1374), we are here concerned with the earlier text, which is the one Laurence used in making his translation.<sup>5</sup>

The *De Casibus* might, as Henri Cochin suggests,<sup>6</sup> be called a history of Fortune; for it is a collection gathered throughout the centuries describing the most memorable and crushing

<sup>1</sup> Temple of Glas, p. cvii.

<sup>2</sup> Legend of St. Edmund and Fremund, I. 187 ff. Temple of Glas, p. cvi.

<sup>3</sup> There are but few eight-line stanzas. See the Envoys on Arsinoë, Antiochus, the Scipios, Herod, and Charles of Anjou; the Chapit le Fortune; the Last Envoy, addressed to Humphrey, and the Words of the Translator to his Book (IV. 3445, V. 1590, 1846, VII. 246, IX. 2017, 3239, 3541, 3589).

<sup>4</sup> We sometimes meet with the title, *De Casibus Virorum et Fæminarum Illustrium*; but as Paul Durrieu has pointed out in his *Le Boccace de Munich*, Munich, 1909, p. 19, the word *virorum* was used in the general sense of "human beings," or, as we say, "people." (Parmi les écrits latins de Boccace, celui qui eut de beaucoup la plus grande notoriété fut le traité intitulé *De Casibus virorum illustrium*, le mot *casibus* répondant à la vieille expression française *cas*, signifiant vicissitude de fortune, et le mot *virorum* étant entendu dans le sens général de genre humain, ce qui fait que le titre *De Casibus virorum illustrium* est devenu, dans le français du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, *Des Cas des nobles hommes et femmes*.)

<sup>5</sup> See Henri Hauvette, *Boccace, Étude Biographique et Littéraire*, Paris, 1914, pp. 391 and 393, note. Also the chapter on *Les Œuvres Latines*, pp. 389, 396 and 347 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Henri Cochin, *Boccace, Études Italiennes*, Paris, 1889, p. 122.

blows dealt by fate to the illustrious personages of mythology and history, and written, as the author himself said,<sup>1</sup> with the object of teaching princes the virtue of wisdom and moderation by holding up to them the example of misfortunes provoked by egotism, pride and inordinate ambition.<sup>2</sup> The form is the familiar one of a vision or dream, the author representing himself at work in his study, while the "famous unfortunates" pass before him in succession, and each tells the story of his fall. Some are presented to Boccaccio by the goddess Fortuna as those to whom she had at one time shown her favour and afterwards thrown from her wheel; others enter unannounced and clamour to be allowed to speak; and there are several who take part in excited conversations with one another or with the author, as in the chapters on Atreus and Thyestes; Messalina, Tiberius and Caligula; and Brunhilde. Occasionally, Boccaccio himself contributes a tale by way of illustration, and several stories are told by Fortuna;<sup>3</sup> and the work is filled with ironical remarks on the vicious stupidity of those to whom fate has given power over the lives of their fellow men. The Latin book is more dramatic and of greater literary value than either Laurence's or Lydgate's translation. The dedicatory epistle to Mainardo dei Cavalcanti, written in 1363,<sup>4</sup> and Boccaccio's preface were translated by Laurence, but the former appears as such only in his first and more literal version; and although he worked parts of it into the preface of his second version, very little was preserved by Lydgate, who also omitted the long dedication by Laurence to the Duke of Berry.

At the present day Boccaccio is known best as the earliest and greatest master of Italian prose, as the author of charming lyrical poems and interludes, and of the first heroic epic in the language; he is hardly known at all as the moralist, historian and man of science of the prose Latin works, *De Genealogia Deorum*, *De Claris Mulieribus*, *De Montibus*, and *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, all of which were compiled or written during the latter part of his life. The history and natural

<sup>1</sup> See Boccaccio's preface, "*Exquirenti mei*," etc., p. xlvi. below.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Boccaccio's preface and Hauvette, *loc. cit.*, p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> See the beginning (first few hundred lines) of Book VI.

<sup>4</sup> See Hauvette, p. 392.

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science of the fourteenth century have little interest for us now except as antiquarians; the moral and political doctrines of *De Casibus* are commonplace and could hardly have been considered very remarkable even at the time they were written, and its art, in spite of its dramatic form and the power of its bitter satire, is not distinguished enough to hold it above the level of the books that perish for all but a few curious students and collectors. But from the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth century the case was very different. Although the *Decameron* had been translated into French by Laurence in 1411, there was no public then capable either of comprehending its historical importance or appreciating its style; and the indelicacy of a few of its stories, no greater than that of many other popular tales of the time, was certainly not such as to cause any great commotion except in ecclesiastical circles, outraged far less by indecency than by the satire of the priesthood. So it was inevitable that, as far as his contemporaries and immediate successors were concerned, Boccaccio's fame as a writer should rest chiefly on his Latin works; and it was as a moralist and man of profound learning that he was best known and respected. To judge by the number of existing manuscripts, the *De Casibus* had an exceedingly large circulation. It was the sort of book that would especially appeal to the great personages of the time: it told about people just like themselves; and although very naturally it taught them nothing—as if the impulses and desires of men were controlled by either precept or example—it at any rate interested them. They were all exposed to the vicissitudes of fortune, and, the world being then very much as it is to-day, many of them became victims of the same disasters that had afflicted and destroyed their predecessors;<sup>1</sup> and it was no doubt a source

<sup>1</sup> En plus d'une occasion, dans les deux cents années qui ont suivi la composition de cet ouvrage, le *De Casibus* a pu servir de réconfort moral à des malheureux. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, nous savons qu'au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle le duc Charles d'Orléans, retenu prisonnier en Angleterre, se fit envoyer pour charmer les loisirs de sa captivité un exemplaire du traité de Boccace. — Durrieu, *loc. cit.*, pp. 20, 21, who refers to Léopold Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris, 1868-1881, I. p. 106. Even in the middle of the sixteenth century, Hieronymus Ziegler, editor and translator of the *De Casibus*, an able man and no pedant, wrote, "Ich habe nie etwas gelesen was mehr Vergnügen und Belehrung gewährt."—Marcus Landau, *Boccaccio*, Stuttgart, 1877, p. 218.

of consolation to some of them, when their hour of trial came, to read about the tribulations of others. And as many of these great people were unable to read Latin, it is quite evident that Laurence was certain of a large and influential public for his translation.

Laurence,<sup>1</sup> who took his name from the village of Premier-fait near Arcis-sur-Aube, was clerk of the diocese of Troyes, a competent writer in French and a Latin scholar, and in the eyes of his contemporaries a poet and orator of distinction. He seems to have made his living chiefly by translating, and his first and more literal version of *De Casibus* was finished on November 13, 1400, and dedicated to Duke Louis of Bourbon. At about this time he became a confidential advisor and clerk to Jean Chantepreme, conseiller du roi de France. In 1405 he translated Cicero's *De Senectute* into French for Duke Louis of Bourbon. Between 1405 and 1409 he translated *De Amicitia* and completed his second version of *De Casibus*<sup>2</sup> for the Duke of Berry while living in the house of Bureau de Dammartin, trésorier de France. During the years 1411-14 he translated the Decameron, and in 1417 Aristotle's Economics; a version of Martin Dumiense's *De quatuor virtutibus* is also attributed to him. He died in Paris in 1418, "année terrible de massacres, d'épidémie et de misère," and was buried in the Cimetière des Innocents.<sup>3</sup>

Of Laurence's first version there are but few manuscripts<sup>4</sup> and only two printed editions, that of Colard Mansion, Bruges, 1476, and the Lyons edition of 1483. Considering the attitude of translators of his time to their originals, it is a comparatively complete and straightforward rendering, and

<sup>1</sup> For the above details in regard to Laurence I am indebted to A. Hortis, *Studi sulle opere latine del Boccaccio*, Trieste, 1879, p. 618 ff.; Durrieu, *loc. cit.*, p. 19 ff. See also Hauvette, *De Laurentio de Primofato* (thesis), Paris, 1903, and *Recherches sur le "De Casibus virorum illustrium" de Boccace*, Paris, 1901 (*Extrait du volume "Entre camarades" publié par la Société des anciens élèves de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris*).

<sup>2</sup> Cy fine le liure de Jehan Boccace des cas des nobles hommes et femmes translate de latin en francois par moy laurens de premierfait clerck du diocese de troies et fut compie ceste translacion le XV<sup>e</sup> jour d'auril mil IIII et IX. Cest assauoir le lundi apres pasques.—Various MSS. Some add the word "closes" to "pasques."

<sup>3</sup> Durrieu, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> In the British Museum, Additional 11,696 and Harley 621.

includes Boccaccio's dedicatory epistle to Mainardo dei Cavalcanti. In his second version Laurence enlarged his earlier work, extending it to more than double its original length by the addition of geographical and historical notes and explanations, interpolating all manner of odd pieces of information from the books he had read — Justin, Florus, Livy, Vincent, Valerius Maximus and others — with the result that much of the dramatic form and power of the original is lost. Although he omitted Boccaccio's epistle to Mainardo, he nevertheless used parts of it as material for his own preface, and added a long dedication to the Duke of Berry, in which he discussed the question of man's relation to fortune, the abuses of the church and priesthood, the conduct of the nobility and the condition of the agricultural labourers.<sup>1</sup>

As Durrieu points out, the work thus transformed became for the French reader "not only a subject for moral discussions and a suitable guidance for the restoration of courage in adversity, but a collection of facts and anecdotes, of curious information about countries and men, and almost a picture in perspective of universal history from Adam and Eve up to the middle of the fourteenth century." It was considered to be an original work rather than a translation, and its success was great. Copied and recopied many times during the entire fifteenth century, it was printed in Paris by Jean du Pré in 1483, in the next year for Antoine Vêrard, again for Vêrard (n. d., but after 1503), by Michel le Noir in 1515, by Nicolas Couteau in 1538, and finally superseded by a new version by Claude Witart, which appeared in 1578. Magnificent manuscript copies<sup>2</sup> were in the possession of the last dukes of the house of Burgundy, from Jean sans Peur to Charles le Téméraire, of Jacques d'Armagnac, duke of Nemours, le Grand bâtard de Bourgogne, Queen Charlotte of Savoy, wife of

<sup>1</sup> See p. liv. ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Paulin Paris, *Les Manuscrits François de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, Paris, 1836-38; Léopold Delisle, *Le Cabinet des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale (Nationale)*, Paris, 1868-81; Hortis, *loc. cit.*, p. 933-938. The manuscripts of Laurence's second version in the British Museum are Royal 18. D. VII., Royal 20. C. IV., Royal 14. E. V., Add. 18,750 and Add. 35,321, of which the last mentioned has been described by Sir Edward Maunde Thompson in the *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. VII. (1905), pp. 198-210, with reproductions of six half-page miniatures.

Louis XI., Louis' sister, Jeanne de France, duchess of Bourbon, his illegitimate daughter, Jeanne, countess of Rousillon, Jean d'Orléans, count of Angoulême (grandfather of Francis I.), Louise of Savoy (mother of Francis I.), Catherine d'Alençon, Henry VII. of England, and many others.<sup>1</sup> A beautifully illuminated codex was presented to the Duke of Berry towards the end of 1410 by Martin de Gouges, bishop of Chartres,<sup>2</sup> and there is a manuscript in the National Library, Munich (described by Durrieu in the work already referred to), with many large miniatures attributed to Jean Fouquet (1415-1485), the most distinguished French painter of the fifteenth century.

The Duke of Berry,<sup>3</sup> for whom Laurence translated the *De Casibus* and Decameron, was born November 30, 1340, third son of king John II. In 1356 he was created Count of Poitiers and made king's lieutenant in southern France, and later on received the province of Languedoc. He suppressed a revolt of the peasants with barbaric severity, collected a fine of £15,000 from the states of the province, fought against the Flemings at Rosebeke in 1382, was active in suppressing the Parisian revolts, and by his bungling and procrastination is said to have caused the failure of a naval expedition planned against England in 1386. In 1389 Charles VI. went to Languedoc to investigate his uncle's government, with the result that the duke was disgraced and his agent Bétisac burnt. And although he was restored in 1401, he did not dare show himself in the province, but delegated his authority to Bernard d'Armagnac. He died in Paris, June 15, 1416, "leaving vast treasures of jewelry, objects of art, and especially of illuminated MSS., many of which have been preserved."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Durrieu, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Hortis, *loc. cit.*, p. 621.

<sup>3</sup> See L. Raynal, *Histoire du Berry*, Bourges, 1845.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article on the Duke of Berry. Hiver de Beauvoir says in his *La Librairie de Jean Duc de Berry au Chateau de Meun-sur-Yèvre*, Paris, 1860, p. 1, "Jean, duc de Berry, frère de Charles V, fut le prince le plus magnifique de son temps, s'inquiétant peu des moyens dès qu'il s'agissait de bâtir, et surtout d'amasser des reliquaires et des bijoux d'église, pour lesquels sa passion alla jusqu'à a manie." And in Léopold Delisle, *loc. cit.*, I. p. 58, we read, "On savait partout, en France et même à l'étranger, le bonheur que le duc de Berry éprouvait à posséder des livres et la munificence avec laquelle il récompensait les cadeaux qui lui étaient faits. Aussi s'empressait-on de lui offrir des volumes dont la beauté devait flatter les plus délicats des bibliophiles du XIV<sup>e</sup> et du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle."

He was fiercely satirized in *Le Songe véritable*, an anonymous pamphlet of the fifteenth century, for, as Henri Moranvillé tells us, in order to satisfy his expensive tastes, "le duc de Berry, dans les lieutenances royales qui-lui furent confiées, n'hésita jamais à accabler d'exactions de tous genres les populations soumises, bien malgré elles, à son autorité. Aussi la réputation de ce prince était-elle exécration de son temps; on n'ignorait point ses goûts dispendieux et on les haïssait, parce qu'on en souffrait cruellement. . . . Après lui avoir retiré très justement la lieutenance en Languedoc à la suite de scandales financiers, où Bétisac avait payé pour son maître, on avait eu le tort de la lui rendre. Aussi, n'ayant plus de frein, dépensait-il énormément, ruinant le domaine, absorbant le revenu des aides; l'argent fondait littéralement entre ses mains et enrichissait d'indignes favoris. Froissart a raconté qu'il s'était pris d'une inexplicable affection pour un tailleur de chausses; le *Songe véritable* parle d'un paveur."<sup>1</sup>

Laurence's long dedication, in which he expresses his indignation aroused by the abuses of the church, the bad behaviour of the nobility and the sufferings of the agricultural labourers, must have had a peculiar interest for the Duke of Berry; although it is quite probable that he read it much as it pleases one to think that the good Duke Humphrey, who appears to have been equally egoistic, avaricious, untrustworthy, intriguing and dissolute, read Lydgate's gravely offered moral and political wisdom, with serious and wholly detached interest. It is an irony of Boccaccio's fate that the translations of his *De Casibus* should have been dedicated to two such men. It is also obvious that both the French and the English versions differed greatly from the original, no less in spirit than in style. As already mentioned, Boccaccio's book was not only more dramatic and concise, but, in spite of its pretentious and artificial manner, which was fashionable at the time, a far more powerful and able work, the work of a great man. The chief effect of Laurence's remarkable capacity for making interpolations was only to impair the literary value of the original, however much it may have added to its interest for con-

<sup>1</sup> Henri Moranvillé, *Le Songe véritable*, pamphlet politique d'un parisien du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. In *Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*, Vol. XVII. (1890), Paris, 1891, p. 227.



temporary readers; and Lydgate, his translator, suffering under the same inability to let well enough alone, might have made matters still worse had it not been for his choice of verse instead of prose, his echoes of Chaucer, and the occasional intrusion of his by no means unsympathetic personality. As it is, Lydgate's version is very superior to that of Laurence and can at least be looked upon as the work of one who, had he written less, might have been an artist, an implication into which there was never any danger of Laurence's falling.<sup>1</sup>

In regard to the spirit of the three authors, especially their reaction to their environments, it can be said with reasonable certainty that Laurence was not much of an idealist or very distinguished intellectually: he added no original thought to the work, except perhaps his prefaced plea for the agricultural labourers, who, as we know, were so badly treated as to endanger their efficiency; and if this plea was the utterance of a kind heart, as no doubt it was, rather than an expression of precocious utilitarianism, nevertheless his loyalty and reverence for the great personages of the day were no less unquestioned than his approval of the social and political system under which they lived; and his willingness to kick the dead lions of the past, after Boccaccio had kicked them, both dead and alive, hardly betrayed a disposition to rashness. Still, he did not hesitate to condemn in general terms what he considered wrong, and took advantage of every occasion to lament the tyranny and avarice of the feudal lords, laity and ecclesiastics, and the unhappy condition of the people; and although he appears occasionally to have reproved the nobility (without being too specific), his tone is moderate, supplicating, seldom admonitory; his wish was to serve and instruct, and he never grew weary of telling his princes that neither their position nor their lives would be secure unless they were willing

<sup>1</sup> "Tuttochè il Lydgate modestamente si contentasse d'essere tenuto per traduttore del *Premierfait*, il suo lavoro può dirsi opera originale. Egli aveva anima da poeta, e lo manifesta già l'ardito pensiero di tradurre in versi un' opera di prosa. Da poeta, egli modifica, come più gli torna, l'ordine de' capitoli, e allarga e ravviva il testo francese, abbastanza prosaico, che gli sta dinanzi. Un concetto filosofico egli abbellisce con leggiadre similitudini tolte per lo più da' fiori o dalle gemme; le storie e le leggende rende piacevoli con particolarità immaginose, poetiche," etc. — Hortis, p. 649.

to defend the people and preserve them in their well-being and safety.<sup>1</sup>

Boccaccio studied his princes from a wholly different point of view. They were to him objects of hostility and bitter scorn, for whom he had neither sympathy nor respect.<sup>2</sup> As he said in his dedicatory Epistle to Mainardo, there was none living, pope, emperor, or king, to whom he cared to dedicate his book. They made him sick.<sup>3</sup> And he believed that as a result of their luxury, magnificence and pride, their avarice, idleness and licentiousness, their hatred of one another and desire for revenge, all honesty, justice and virtue were lost, and that by the example of their superiors the people were contaminated and led into evil customs.<sup>4</sup> So he wrote, hoping to bring the erring to the right path, to suppress vices, to arouse the indolent from their slumber, and to incite all men

<sup>1</sup> Hortis, p. 627.

<sup>2</sup> Qualiter hoc faciant principes hodierni, viderit Deus. In Tyrannidem versi sunt regii mores, et despecta impotentia subditorum: auro, gemmisque splendere uolunt, longo seruiuntium ordine circumdari, palatia in excelsum erigere, grege pellicum, et histrionum, deformi sodalicio oblectari: obscœnitatibus aures complere, conuiuia in longissimam noctem deducere, ebrietatibus, atque ignominiosis libidinibus vacare, dies in somnos profundissimos perdere, populos in suam salutem uigiles permanere: et bella non iure, sed iniuria sumere, magnificum arbitrantur: consilia proborum respuere, sibi tantum credere: bonos deprimere, improbos extollere: ciuitates vectigalibus onerare, ciues torquere, in exilium agere, trucidare, & luti more calce calcare. O scelestum malum, O prædonum, lurconumque, ne regum dicam, inhonesta, & horrenda facinora. O longa, immo vecors patientia populorum, & stolidia confidentia dominorum, si putent, dum talia peragunt, à populis sibi obsequi cum fide. Quæso cum videam eum, cui honorem meum, libertatem, maiestatem, officium, præeminentiam omnem concessi: cui obsequium iussus impendo, cui desudo, cuius substantias meas imparcior, cuius in salutem sanguinem effundo meum, in extenuationem, desolationem, vituperium, & perniciem inuigilare meam: sanguinem sitire, haurire, emungere, inhonestis fœminis, & perditissimis quibuscunque hominibus prodige facultates (quibus sustentare egenos, et miserabiles debuerant) effundere, atque disperdere: & in consilium niti pessimum, & pessimis operibus delectari: ac circa salutem publicam segnem, torpentem, desidemque video, regem dicam? principem colam? tamquam domino fidem seruabo? absit. Hostis est, in hunc coniurare, arma capessere, insidias tendere, vires opponere magnanimi est, sanctissimum est, & omnino necessarium. Cum nulla fere deo sit acceptior hostia Tyranni sanguine: durum quippe, & importabile pro meritis iniuriarum reportare. Recalcitrent quantum libet reges, si centies negent, regnant tamen suffragio populorum, eorumque vires illos formidabiles faciunt. Quasi minus iuste cædibus, aut iniuriis extenuent, suum sentient confestum diminutum imperium.— *De Caribus*, II. 5, In *Superbos*, from Hieronymus Ziegler's edition, Augsburg, 1544.

<sup>3</sup> See Epistle to Mainardo.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. Boccaccio's preface.

to virtue; but unlike Laurence and Lydgate, he wrote not for the personal advantage of the princes, for whose benefit his translators believed their subjects existed, but for the welfare of the community.<sup>1</sup>

Boccaccio was also responsible for an attack on women in the eighteenth chapter of Book II., *In Mulieres*, which deserves more than passing reference. We know that invectives and satires of women were especially popular during the Middle Ages. Stories, many of them of oriental origin, such as were included in collections like the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Petrus Alfonsi (baptised in 1106), the influence of asceticism, of sentiments similar to those expressed in the latter part of the third chapter of Isaiah, and of writers like the thirteenth century Franciscan, Brother Jacopone da Todi,<sup>2</sup> whose *Lauda viii.*, "O femene, guardate," is still delightful to read, helped to create an atmosphere in which Boccaccio found himself even more at home than Guido delle Colonne, author of the "Troy Book," had been a century earlier. For towards the end of 1354, a few years before the *De Casibus* was begun, he at the age of forty-one was most unkindly rebuffed and ridiculed by a young widow to whom he had been imprudent enough to write declaring his affection. At first, as Hauvette tells the story, he was overcome with mortification, and fancied that he could see the passers-by pointing their fingers at him in the street — he could even hear their smothered laughter — for the rebuff had included personal remarks of a gross nature, and he was grey and precociously stout; but as time went on his mortification gave way to anger, which, according to

<sup>1</sup> "Il Boccaccio, cittadino di una libera repubblica, da lungo dimentico del feudalismo, aveva co' propri occhi veduto il mal governo de' principi d' allora, e la cacciata di uno che aveva tentato di farsi tiranno in Firenze. Dallo studio amoroso e intelligente dell'antichità latina egli aveva acquistato un modo di pensare democratico e pagano, che s'accordava mirabilmente col suo amore d'indipendenza. Il Premierfait legge tutti gli autori, ma de' profani e classici s'appropria le notizie, non il modo di pensare. I suoi libri erano chiesti e letti dai principi; ma nelle opere del Boccaccio, più spesso che panegirici, i principi potevano leggere la propria satira." — Hortis, p. 626.

<sup>2</sup> For Brother Jacopone, see two admirable articles in the "Times Literary Supplement" of April 15 and December 23, 1920. The *Lauda* have been edited by Giovanni Ferri and published by the *Società Filologica Romana*, Rome, 1910, as well as in the series *Scrittori d'Italia*, Bari, 1915, and there are translations, together with the texts, of many of them in Evelyn Underhill's "Jacopone da Todi," London, 1919.



Hauvette, "fut très vif, et se manifesta tout d'abord par un immense désir de vengeance." So he sat down and wrote his *Corbaccio*, an unimaginative and unpleasantly interesting book, and was apparently still very angry when he wrote the *In Mulieres* chapter of the *De Casibus*, in which, returning to the same subject, he presents us with another instructive, if one-sided, description of the artifices employed for various purposes by the women of fashion of his time. However, as we have seen, he did not spare the men, nor, for that matter, did Brother Jacopone; their blows were equitably distributed.

The attitude of Lydgate to his surroundings, and especially to his princes, was quite different from that of either Boccaccio or Laurence. Although always ready to counsel and advise, and, when he considered it necessary, to admonish, he was never rude, like Boccaccio, nor servile, like Laurence, but wrote throughout as a man of the world, an aristocrat and courtier, whose contempt for the political capacity of the people was exceeded only by Boccaccio's scorn for the political and moral accomplishments of their sovereigns. He omitted most of Boccaccio's censure of the clerics, which Laurence had allowed to remain in his versions, and showed himself by his fierceness to heretics much less tolerant in religious matters than the great Italian. Neither foolish nor ill-bred enough to take his "manly and wise" patron to task for his infidelities and excesses, he nevertheless stood out firmly enough for the domestic virtues and did not hesitate to tell princes, at least in the abstract, to lead sober, industrious lives and to set aside their concubines.<sup>1</sup> Murder, poison, bloodthirstiness and tyranny (p. 310), deceit (p. 323), dishonesty (p. 416), slander and hasty belief in it (p. 126), pride (pp. 38, 170), suspicion, ingratitude (p. 655), bad behaviour to the church (p. 278), covetousness (p. 432), and vulgar materialism (p. 399), are among the things which he mentions with special reprobation in his envoys.

In spite of his expressed opinion that the people were there chiefly for the personal advantage of their rulers,<sup>2</sup> he nevertheless believed that if a man of humble origin is ordained by God to be a king he will succeed in overcoming the resistance of all earthly princes;<sup>3</sup> for nobility is by the grace of God and

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 299, 360.

<sup>2</sup> Comp., for example, I. 1393.

<sup>3</sup> See the stories of Nimrod, I. 1282, and Cyrus, III. 2962.

not by blood, and poverty is no bar to royalty; nor can anything good ever come of an evil stock. His attitude towards women remains the same as it was in the "Troy Book:" some of Boccaccio's remarks he leaves out; for others he apologises. It must be remembered, however, that Boccaccio also qualified his apparently sweeping assertions, and that not only the sentiments expressed on pages 188 and 189, but the very words, are his as well as Lydgate's. An old and not very brilliant jest on marriage makes its appearance apropos of the story of Orpheus; but it evidently pleased Lydgate and his readers (the lines are marked in approval in several MSS.), just as Dr. Thomas Lisle's version is said to have pleased Benjamin Franklin, and, as we have reason to believe, it pleases certain of the public to-day.<sup>1</sup>

Although Lydgate's work was much admired by his contemporaries and immediate successors and enjoyed at least one hundred and fifty years of popularity, no one in more recent times, so far as I am aware, except Thomas Gray in his "Remarks," who was hardly enthusiastic, and Mrs. Browning,<sup>2</sup> who approved of him for other than purely aesthetic reasons, has given him much praise as an artist. A writer who usually contrives to spoil even his most felicitous passages before he has done with them, who systematically pads out his lines with stock phrases and rhyme-tags, and pours out unending streams of verse during apparently the whole of a very long life, cannot well be taken seriously as one of the great poets. We search his works in vain for evidence either of imagination or originality, of sympathetic insight into character, sensibility, delicacy of feeling or a fine instinct for form; nor is he distinguished for more purely intellectual qualities. On occasion he shows that he has power and rises to a sombre dignity of manner, well seen in parts of the "Fall of Princes"<sup>3</sup> and in the *Daunce of Machabree*, and this, together with a strain of melancholy, which was in the air at the time and a few years later inspired François Villon to his finest

<sup>1</sup> For Dr. Thomas Lisle and "The Power of Music," see "The London Mercury," Vol. V., p. 295. For a modern instance, see the "At Random" column of "The Observer," February 27, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> In "The Book of the Poets." Comp. Schick, p. clvii.

<sup>3</sup> See the Envoy on Rome, II. 4460, the Envoy on Cæsar, especially the latter part, VI. 2871, the Envoy on Charles of Anjou, IX. 2017, and the Chapter and Envoy on King John of France, IX. 3134.

work, is perhaps his strongest point. No doubt in his day he was highly commended for both pathos and humour; but the latter when not unconscious is as a rule little more than clumsy playfulness, and the former too obvious and exaggerated to make any deep impression on the reader (although Thomas Gray seems to have thought highly of it),<sup>1</sup> and neither is sufficient to make a poet. However, considering his intellectual environment, his position, and his public, he surely did all that can reasonably be expected of him. The rude men of action of the time were slow-witted and uneducated; even the clerks, if we are to judge, as we must, by their literary performances, were a singularly prosaic lot, and taste was evidently unknown in their circles. As Gray remarked, "it is a folly to judge of the understanding and of the patience of those times by our own. They [the reading public] loved, I will not say tediousness, but length and a train of circumstances in a narration." They got both in the "Fall of Princes." Even Boccaccio laid aside much of his genius when he began to write histories for the edification of the men of the world of his day; and whatever qualities of greatness the work possesses lie rather in the hammer blows of its subject-matter than in the art either of the author or of his translators.

On the other hand, the "Fall of Princes" is a document of considerable historical and philological importance. Taken together with the original Latin and Laurence's French translation, it does indeed illumine the intellectual life of its day,<sup>2</sup> if only faintly, for the thought reflected on the pages of both Laurence and Lydgate is unfortunately that of a very narrow and conservative group and cannot be considered as representative of the best minds of the time. The most that may be said of either of them is that he was able to recognize that, in general, men reap what they have sown.

From the philological point of view the book is of interest, in part because we may assume that the language in which it was written is the English of the most highly educated classes of its period, in part because, just as in the case of the "Troy

<sup>1</sup> Gray says that Lydgate, in the Epistle of Canace, "has touched the very heart-springs of compassion with so masterly a hand, as to merit a place among the greatest poets."

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Hortis, p. 654.

Book," many words borrowed early in the fifteenth century from the French make their first documented appearance on its pages. Practically the entire literature of the "Fall of Princes" has yet to be investigated. There is no modern edition either of Boccaccio or of Laurence; neither the one nor the other has been printed since the sixteenth century; no adequate study of their sources has been published; and except for Dr. Koeppel's short essay,<sup>1</sup> we have no account of Lydgate's sources or of the influence of his work on succeeding writers. The most recent edition of the "Mirror for Magistrates" is Haslewood's of 1815.

The text of the present edition is based on MS. Bodley 263 (B), collated throughout with the British Museum MSS. Royal 18. D. iv. (R) and Harley 1245 (H), and in part (especially in regard to doubtful points) with MSS. Royal 18. B. xxxi. (R 3), Harley 4203 (H 5), and the Rylands-Jersey MS. (J). Use has also been made of Sloane 4031, Add. 21,410, the Phillips-Garrett MS. in the Library of Princeton University, and Tottel's print, which, considering the time of its publication, is most excellent and derived from a good manuscript. The "Envoy to Gloucester" (IX. 3303-3540), the "Last Envoy" (IX. 3541-3588), and six stanzas missing from the story of Lucrece (II. 1058-1099) have been supplied from Harley 1766, a unique abridged but early MS., and one stanza of the Villon-like "Envoy on Rome" (II. 4460 ff.) is from Tottel, collated with the Phillips-Garrett MS.

In preparing the text for the press I have supplied capital letters when necessary and punctuated according to modern usage; but I have not noted blunders or slips of the pen that were subsequently corrected by the original copyist unless they are of special interest. All alterations in spelling by the editor are noted, with one exception: the awkward form "wordly" of the Bodley copyist, for which I have consistently substituted "worldly"; and all other changes in the text are marked by asterisks. The numerous hooks and flourishes of the scribe, which, when they signify only a final *e* (and often they are quite meaningless), have not as a rule been expanded unless the *e* is of more than graphical significance. For the crossed *b*'s, *k*'s, *l*'s and double *l*'s, I have

<sup>1</sup> Munich, 1885.

substituted plain letters, except when the horizontal stroke actually stands for a contraction, as, for example, "Boch" with crossed *b* = Bochas, "who" and "hy" with *b*'s crossed = whom and hym, "makyg" with crossed *k* = makyng. The crossed *l* is usually a contraction for a following *e*, as is also the crossed double *l*; the latter, which is commonly used in manuscripts of the period to represent *lles*, is rarely, if at all, employed for that purpose in B. The occasional horizontal strokes over *m*'s and *n*'s and *u*'s are as a rule omitted to avoid confusion, and expanded only when actually necessary, as is certainly not the case in such words as Chaucer, up, favour, or dismembred.

In the following brief survey of the contents of the "Fall of Princes" the references are to the pages, and passages of special interest or charm are marked with asterisks.

Book I. Prologue; \*Adam and Eve, 13; Nimrod, 28; \*Against the Pride of Princes, 36; Saturn and the Process of Time, 39; Zoroaster, Ninus, Moses, 42; Ogygus, Isis, 45; Erysichthon, Danaus, Philomela and Procne, 49; Cadmus, 51; Æetes, Jason, Theseus, Scilla, Nisus, 60; Sisera, Deborah, Gideon, 79; Jabin, 86; Œdipus, 87; \*Atreus and Thyestes, 106; The Story of Theseus, 118; \*Envoy on Hasty Credence, 126; Facetious defence of Woman accused by Bochas of unstableness, 132; On the Suspicion and Dread of Lords, 134; Althæa and Meleager, 136; Hercules, 141 (lines 5104 ff. are excellent); Narcissus, Byblis, Myrrha, Orpheus (playful lines about marriage), 156; Marpessa, Priam and Troy Book, 166; \*Against the Pride of Those who Trust in Riches, 170; \*In Praise of Poverty, 172; \*Samson, 179; \*Chapter on the Malice of Women, 184; Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, 190; Canace and Macareus, 193; \*The Letter of Canace, 194.

Book II. Saul, 204; On the Virtue of Obedience, 214; Rehoboam, 216; On the Governance of Princes (analogy of human body to body politic), 221; Mucius Scævola, Lucrece (first appearance), 225; Appius and Virginia, 237; Jeroboam, Zerah, Ahab, Athaliah, 240; Dido, 253; \*Satirical Envoy to Widows by Lydgate, 262; \*Sardanapalus, On Virtuous Industry, 263; \*Amaziah and Uziah, Jehoash (good lines on the Cypress and the Puff-Ball), 272; Hoshea, Sennacherib, Zedekiah, 278; The Story of Cyrus' Youth (nobility comes by grace of God not by blood, poverty no bar to a throne), 283; \*Candaules and Gyges, 294; Midas, Belshazzar, Envoy advising Princes to set aside their Concubines, 296; Cræsus and Cyrus, the

end of Cyrus, 300; Romulus and Remus, 311; \* On the Abuse of Deifying Men, 318; Metius Suffetius, 319; \* Against Deception, Hostilius, 323; \* Envoy on Rome, 325.

Book III. \* Prologue; the Strife between Fortune and Glad Poverty (tedious except for a few lighter touches), 333; Hostilius, Ancus Marcius, Lucinio, 349; Lucrece (second appearance), 355; \* Bochas on the Immorality of Princes, 360; Cambyses, Smerdis, Oropastes, Otanes, Darius, 374; Coriolanus, 381; Miltiades, 386; Envoy on the Fickleness of the People; Xerxes, Leonidas, 390; \* On the Vulgar Materialism of Men, 399; Artabanus and Darius, 402; Phalanthus and his Spartans, 405; Ceso Quintius, Clœlius Gracchus, 410; \* On the Tyranny of Appius, 413; On the Dishonesty of Judges and The Former Age (some interesting lines), 416; \* An Exclamation against Dishonest Officials, 419; Alcibiades, 420; \* Exclamation on the Death of Alcibiades, 430; \* On Worldly Covetousness and Ambition, 432; \* In Praise of Industrious Men, On Poets, 434; Machæus, Himilco, Hanno, 437; \* Against Covetous People, 447; Evagoras of Cyprus, Theo of Egypt, Amyntas, Philip of Macedon, Epaminondas, 454; Haman and Mordecai, Esther, 462; Artaxerxes and Cyrus, Darius, An Envoy on Fraternal Strife, 465.

Book IV. \* Prologue on Poets and Writing, 473; Marcus Manlius, Roman Crowns and Wreaths, 479; A description of Roman Triumphs, the Tarpeian Rock, 487; Nectanebes, Pausanias, Heliarchus, 492; \* Dionysius of Syracuse, Envoy on Tyranny, on Princes who hold themselves Gods, 495; Polycrates, 500; Alexander and Callisthenes, 504; Alexander of Epirus, 513; Darius and Alexander the Great, 517; \* Envoy on Darius, 527; On the Misery and Ruin of War, the Heirs of Alexander, Eumenes, Antigonus, 528; Envoy on Sudden Adversity, \* Queen Olympias, 536; Envoy on Murder and Vengeance, 543; Agathocles (a crown of gold is not suitable for the head of a knave; a crowned ass is more to dread than a lion), 545; Envoy — every creature takes after his parents' stock, 553; Cassander, Bersane, Antipater, Peucestas, Amyntas, Sandrocottus, 554; Seleucus and Antiochus, Arsinoë and Ceraunus, \* Envoy on Fortune's Variance, 562; Ceraunus slain by the Gauls, Brennus, who had no respect for the gods, Pyrrhus of Epirus, Aristotimus, 569; Arsinoë, wife of Magas, and Demetrius, her daughter's husband, 582.

Book V. Bochas' Disdain of those who set all their Joy to excel in Beauty, Spurina, \* Envoy on the Fragility of Worldly Fairness, 585; Seleucus and Antiochus, 588; Laodameia of Sicily, Cleomenes, Hiero of Syracuse, Xanthippus, 592; Marcus Regulus, 597; Ptolemy Philopator, Britomaris, 608; Syphax and Masinissa, Hasdrubal, Scipio, 614; Nabis of Macedonia, 617; The Wars between Rome and Carthage, 619; Perseus



of Sparta, the Destruction of Corinth, 621; Seleucus and Antiochus, Laodice and the Ring and Anchor, 626; Hieronymus of Syracuse, the Ingratitude of the Romans to the Scipios, 630; Philopœmen, 634; the Story of Hannibal, 638; Prusias of Bithynia, Persa of Macedon, Azariah, Andriscus (a cur is more impudent than a lion), Alexander Balas, 645; An Envoy on Ingratitude; Caius and Tiberius Gracchus, Hasdrubal's wife, Jonathan Maccabeus, Demetrius II., Zebina, Bituitus, 655; Ptolemy Euergetes, Jugurtha, 666.

Book VI. \*Fortuna appears to Bochas; they converse together, 675; Fortuna tells Bochas about Saturninus, Marius, Drusus, Fanaticus, Spartacus, Viriathus, Orodes and Pompey, 689; Marius and Sulla, 701; Mithridates, 711; Envoy on Worldly Variance, Eucratides of Scythia, Orodes and Crassus, Fymbria, Adrian of low degree, usurper of Rome, Sothimus, Description of Thrace, 720; Pompey and the Wars with Cæsar, 729; Pompey's Death, Julius Cæsar, Juba, \*A Digression on Clothes, the last Scipio, Pompey's son Pompey, 743; the Death of Cæsar, Envoy on Cæsar, Octavian, Tully, 751; A Chapter on Rhetoric and Oratory, 763; Sextus Pompey, Antony and Cleopatra, 769.

Book VII. Antony's son, Antony, Cæsarion, Julia, Agrippa, Cassius, \*Herod, Herod Antipas, 775; \*The Words between Messalina, Caligula, and Tiberius, 784; \*Nero, Eleazar, Galba, Otho, \*Vitellius, 791; Bochas on The Vice of Gluttony, \*A Description of the Golden World, 806; \*The Destruction of Jerusalem, 812.

Book VIII. \*Petrarch appears to Bochas, 823; the Roman Emperors, Domitian, Commodus, Severus, Antoninus, Macrinus, Antoninus Aurelius, Marcus Aurelius, Maximus, Gordian, the two Philips, Decius, Gallus, Volusian, Æmilian, Gallien, \*Valerian, Gallienus, Quintilius, Aurelian the Dane, Probus, Clarus, 829; Zenobia, 842; Diocletian, Carausius, Maximian, Galerius, Maxence, Licinius, Constantine and Crispus, 844; Constans and Constantius, Vetranio, 853; \*Constantine the Great, 856; \*Julian the Apostate, On Blasphemy and Oaths, 864; Valens, Theodosius I., Hermanric, Gratian, \*Theodosius the Great, 870; Alaric, Radagaisus, Rufinus, Stilicho, Heraclius, Odoacer, and \*On the Conduct of Kings, 882; "Remembre o Rome," Trasilla, Busar, Philete, Symmachus, Boethius, 894; \*King Arthur and Britain, An Exclamation against Men who are Unkind to their Kindred, 898; Gelimer, Amarales, Sindbal, \*Queen Rosamond, 913.

Book IX. The Emperor Maurice, \*Muhammad, \*Brunhilde, 919; Heraclius and Chosroes, Constantine, son of Heraclius, who was murdered in a stew, Gisulf and his wife Romilda, Justinian Temerarius, Philippicus, an odious heretic, 933; The Covetousness and Pride of the Priesthood, Four strangely

dressed kings of Lombardy; Desiderius, Pope Joan, a woman with child, Arnulph, natural son of Carloman, made unfortunate by worms and lice, 942; Bochas against the Pride of Princes, Pope John XII., Duke Charles of Lorraine confounded by hunger, Salamon of Hungary, Diogenes Romanus, Robert of Normandy, Josselyn of Rages, Andronicus I. Comnenus, Envoy on Vicious Princes, 948; the Emperor Isaac, Robert Surrentine, Tancred, Guy de Lusignan, John of Brienne, Henry, son of Frederick II., A Commendation of Love between Kindred, 962; Manfred of Naples, Enzo of Sardinia, A Water that makes Thieves Blind and an Herb that makes People Laugh themselves to Death, Frederick, son of Alphonse of Castile, Maumetus of Persia, and Argones, 970; Charles of Lorraine, \* Envoy to Charles, Ugolino of Pisa, Aiton of Armenia, Pope Boniface VIII., who ate his hands, 972; The Order of Templars, A Commendation of three Philosophers for their Patience, A Commendation of Patience, Philip the Fair and his Sons, 979; \* Dante appears to Bochas and tells him to write the Story of Duke Gaultier, 990; \* Philippa Catanensi, Louis of Jerusalem, \* King John of France, 998; \* Envoy to John of France, \* A Chapter of Fortune, Envoy to Duke Humphrey, \* The Last Envoy, Words of the Translator to his Book.



## THE METRE

During the years that I have been occupied with the "Fall of Princes" the conclusion has been forced upon me more and more that Lydgate's decasyllabic lines are far better, in the sense of being more capably written from a purely metrical point of view, than some of his modern critics, who evidently had no proper facilities for studying his work, were able to discover. It is most improbable that his reputation as a poet among his contemporaries and immediate successors would have been as great as it was had he not had a good ear for rhythm and been a competent and, in spite of the convention of exaggerated modesty which led him to speak always in disparagement of his ability, skilful writer of metrical English. Nor is it easy to believe that his introduction of variety into what would have been otherwise an intolerably monotonous flow of regular decasyllabics was not both conscious and intentional. As Mr. Bridges has pointed out in one of his Oxford lectures on poetry, the fundamental motive of our pleasure in the beauty of verse "may be described as a balance between the expected and the unexpected," that "arises from our knowledge of the normal rhythm (the type) beneath the varieties which the poet delights to extend and elaborate; his skill in this sort of embroidery being to push its disguises as far as he dare without breaking away from the type."<sup>1</sup> It has also been well said by Mr. Owen Barfield,<sup>2</sup> that the music of poetry is "a kind of elusive discrepancy between two rhythms. Some rigidly regular metrical form is taken, . . . and on to this, as on an iron frame, is fitted a soft fabric of words already woven in a rhythm of their own . . . the rhythm of natural speech or prose. . . . The two rhythms clash and overlap, and subtly intersect in such a way that one

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from a review in the "Times Literary Supplement," July 4, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> "The New Statesman," January 15, 1921.

delicate, unreal echo is struck out from their jarring; and this is the main music of poetry." Accent is not constant, nor ought it to be constant, for if perfectly regular the effect of a long passage is ruined by its monotony.

Although such principles as these may not seem readily applicable to the art of a writer who usually manages to ruin his long passages in a wholly different and even less creditable manner, they are nevertheless to be considered in his case precisely as in that of any other writer of verse.

In the introductory note to the "Troy Book" I said that no fault could legitimately be found with the metre so long as Lydgate paid due regard to the swing of his dominant five beats, and I was no less unable to agree then than I am now with the opinion that because of his so-called broken-backed line, which can be on occasion a very fine line indeed, and the blunders of copyists he should be considered as inferior as a metrist as he undoubtedly was as a poet and thinker. If we are to do justice to Lydgate's metre, it is first of all necessary for us to know what Lydgate wrote. Even in the oldest manuscripts many lines occur in a distorted, mutilated form, and there are invariably some lines which appear to be defective in all manuscripts. It would be no less unfair to make Lydgate responsible for lines like these, than difficult, assuming that he did write them, to decide which of the alternative readings should be accepted as his. Another source of uncertainty to the present-day editor, of which I shall have occasion to speak later on, is a result of the increasing negligence of copyists during the fifteenth century, not only in regard to such small matters as final *e*'s, to which they gave no attention whatever, and various prefixes and suffixes, but sometimes extending to the insertion or omission of articles, conjunctions and prepositions, like *the* and *as*, or *for* preceding the *to* of the infinitive, and the alternative use of synonyms or parallel word-forms having an unequal number of syllables.

A further cause of trouble, which should not be forgotten, as it has had more influence, perhaps, than anything else in giving students false notions of Lydgate's metre and incidentally has shown how little real knowledge of his style there has been up to within comparatively recent times, is the attribution to him of works he did not write, such, for example, as "The

Assembly of Gods," and shorter poems, like the admirable but metrically corrupt "London Lickpenny."<sup>1</sup> Nor has the reissue of texts, which, like the *Secreta Secretorum*, exist only in a few late manuscripts and are naturally far from correct, tended to improve matters.

Unfortunately the question of Lydgate's metre is made very complicated by difficulties of the language; for unless we have a fair idea of the pronunciation of his time and class and a working knowledge of Chaucer's metrical practice, especially his use of the final *e*, for the analysis of which we are so largely indebted to Bernhard ten Brink, we cannot expect to get very far. To read Lydgate as if his language were present-day English, as I have actually heard some people do, or even to try to pronounce his lines as if they were written in French (which is somewhat closer to the mark), is impossible and absurd. At the best our attempts to reproduce his pronunciation and that of his contemporaries amount to no more than a very rough approximation. We are certain to do a large amount of misrepresenting and to make a good many mistakes; and I have often wondered, were Lydgate now alive and for once inclined to do a little correcting on his own account, what he would think of our efforts at criticism and interpretation and of the various opinions that have been expressed at different times by scholars in regard to his metre.

We have in the "Fall of Princes" numerous examples of all the "types" or "forms" of the decasyllabic line used by Lydgate except the somewhat doubtful type with a trisyllabic first measure. There are the normal type of ten or eleven syllables (A), the line with an extra syllable before the *cæ*sura (B), lines with a syllable missing directly after the *cæ*sura (C), with the first syllable missing (D), and with both the first syllable and the syllable after the *cæ*sura missing (a combination of C and D). There are very few examples of the combination of B and D described in the "Troy Book" under the heading 5, for most of these lines can be read as normal; and I can find no absolutely certain examples of lines with a

<sup>1</sup> See "The Lydgate Canon" by H. N. MacCracken, Miss Hammond's parallel text reprint in *Anglia*, xx., p. 400, and the text of the eight-line version in Sir Frederick Bridge's "The Old Cryes of London," Novello & Co., London, 1921.

trissyllabic first measure: it is questionable whether there are any such in the "Fall of Princes."

The majority of the lines are of the ordinary type A, with ten or eleven syllables:

- I. 2. The book of Bochas in Frensh to translate
- I. 3. Out of Latyn, he callid was Laurence, etc., etc.

Of type B there are also many examples:

- I. 29. Afforn prouydid that no presumpcioun
- II. 3361. Alas I was nat auysid weel befor
- II. 3458. Besouhte Bachus sum remedi to shape
- III. 1660. The temple off Iupiter to robbe it be rauyne (syncope of *i* in *Iupiter*)
- III. 3088. This litil tragedie doth shortli heer deuise (apocope of *il* in *litil*)
- III. 3355. Wenten into exil nat ferr fro that cuntre
- III. 3553. Cam out to meete hym upon a wol fair pleyne
- III. 3612. A thyng most odious to eueri comounte (synizesis of *io* in *odious*)
- VII. 206. An hundrid fourti four thousand as I reede
- IX. 2081. A thousand thre hundred acountid was the year (apocope of *ed* in *hundred*)

Other examples are: I. 5306, II. 1018, 1848, III. 1946, 2000, 2011, 3014, 3618, IV. 3127, 3961, V. 514, 2933, VI. 2353, 2953, 3347, VIII. 130, 1022, 1965, 2191, 2291, IX. 3050, 3067, 3386.

Type D is of frequent occurrence:

- I. 1. He that whilom dede his dilligence
- I. 9. Artificeres hauyng exercise
- I. 11. Shappis formys and newli hem deuys (read "forms")
- I. 27. With ther colours agreable of hewe
- III. 2235. Had also in cronycles as I reede (syncope of *y* in *cronycles*)
- III. 3617. How in manhod he was pereles
- V. 2857. To the Romeyns any wise tobeye

Lines in which the first syllable is missing and an extra syllable added before the cæsure are comparatively rare and difficult to identify with certainty, for most of them can be read very well as normal. The following are probably examples:

- II. 557. Stant the weelfare off eueri regeoun
- II. 728. In Ioséphus his story ye may reede
- II. 933. Wher Porcéna sat in his roial see
- VI. 3070. Alle assentid & sworn to Catallyne

In regard to type C, the so-called broken-backed line, it can be said with no less certainty that it was frequently used by Lydgate in the "Fall of Princes"—I cannot agree with Professor Kaluza's apparent rejection of it—than that properly

read and not lifted out of its context it is usually, although not always, admirable, and on the whole quite as "good" as any other line. In many cases it is a practical impossibility for us to say whether we have to deal with it or with the normal type (A), into which it can always be transformed by the addition of a syllable at the cæsure; and although I doubt that there was ever any question in Lydgate's mind as to what sort of line he was writing or how he intended his lines to be scanned, we are to-day greatly handicapped by the neglect of copyists in matters of detail (the presence or absence of a final *e* in a manuscript usually meaning nothing at all) as well as by our ignorance of Lydgate's pronunciation. In saying that the use of the final *e* as a metrical syllable was wholly artificial in Lydgate's time, for the reason that it had long disappeared from the spoken language, and that consequently it is not impossible that, for the sake of the metre, Lydgate sometimes added an *e* to words to which it did not belong etymologically,<sup>1</sup> Professor Kaluza was no doubt in the main correct. Only in the case of Lydgate, who although quite conscious of his inferiority always had Chaucer's metrical practice in mind and apparently never varied his method, the idea of time hardly comes into consideration. As a metrist he looked upon himself as one of his master's contemporaries. Final *e*'s had crept in through false analogy long before the fifteenth century, and it cannot be assumed that Lydgate knew very much about etymology; nevertheless, I believe that a careful examination of the metre will show nothing more than an inclination on Lydgate's part to make a somewhat fuller use of the final *e* than Chaucer did, especially in the dative case, more rarely in the accusative, and very seldom in the nominative, of nouns of the strong declension with consonant endings. There is no evidence whatever of an indiscriminate adding of silent *e*'s.

The following examples of type C are to my mind very good lines. Properly read, with a marked pause at the cæsure, there is no unpleasant clashing together of accented syllables. One could as well say that the syllables clash together unpleasantly in "That stretches and swings to the slow passionate pulse of the sea"; or "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows."

<sup>1</sup> *Literaturblatt für germ. Phil.*, 1899, pp. 373-375; 1900, p. 408.

- I. 5120. Nor alle men may nat been iliche
- I. 5671. And fynali as poetis telle
- II. 2795. Senacherib off Assirie kyng
- III. 1480. Ther woful fall Guido dede endite
- III. 1758. And heerupon to be certefied
- III. 2430. Foufe thousand men Xerses thedir sente
- III. 2497. Fledde in a boot lik a coward knyht
- III. 2698. Bi gret auys weies he hath souht
- III. 2815. This was theeffect pleyntli in substaunce
- III. 2883. Nor fader non by his gret errour
- III. 2972. On hors[el]-bak thoruh ther gret swiftnesse
- III. 3219. Amyd the se ferr out fro the stronde
- III. 3522. Strong was the fiht or that thei wer take
- III. 3527. And aftir that whan he cam to londe
- III. 3555. Bothe old & yong with ful glad visages
- III. 3598. Banyshed ageyn out of his cite
- III. 3614. Which suffred nat them to lyue in pes
- III. 4372. Is seelde glad as for his partie
- III. 4459. Is onli this thei do non excesse
- V. 424. Tween man and man or of wilful rage
- V. 2204. Al desolat cried for almesse

Other good examples are: I. 4629, 5469, 5582, III. 2034, 2836, IV. 149, 1629, 1756, 2445, 3052, 3156, 3564, 3634, 3751, 3852, V. 63, 256, 588, 742, 813, 1110, 1923, 2019, 2878, 3085, VI. 1215, 1220, 1380, 1885, 2261, 65, 2351, 2782, 3049, VII. 315, 1495, VIII. 817, 1296, 1852, 2052, 2129, 2944, 3312, IX. 2020, 24, 2998, 3254.

In the following lines both the first syllable and a syllable at the cæsura are wanting:

- I. 906. Than a man for to haue delit
- I. 1004. Which that God took with Noes Flood
- IV. 860. Whereupon whan he caste his look
- V. 2063. Hanybal gan his purpos holde
- V. 2455. Set him up in his roiall stall
- VI. 792. Spartharchus was ther cheef capteyn
- VI. 914. Vnto which whan thei wer repeired
- VI. 1335. Aftir that for hir gret fairnesse
- VI. 1796. Thei to hym yold[e] up the toun
- VIII. 53. Lik a man hangyng in ballaunce
- VIII. 515. Smet out oon of his eyen tweyne
- VIII. 2723. Orcadois, Denmark and Houlond
- IX. 2303. Chewed it al on pecis smale
- IX. 2857. Day be day caried vitaille

On the other hand, there are many doubtful and difficult examples of lines of the above types. Some of them, as Professor Kaluza and Dr. MacCracken have stated, can be easily mended, or, as I should prefer to say, transformed, into type A or D. It would be most undesirable to amend Lydgate with a view to smoothing his lines for the benefit of present-



day readers; and whenever textual alterations are undertaken it should naturally be done with the sole object of restoring, so far as we are able, the text to its original state. This we are often able to do successfully on the basis of the manuscripts; but when there is no manuscript authority for a change, it is best to leave things as they are unless the suggested emendation is a very simple and obvious one, as is sometimes the case; for often manuscript authority may represent nothing more, especially if in a late text, than the very questionable conjecture of a copyist. The presence or absence of a final *e* in a manuscript, as I have already said, usually means nothing: we are glad enough to take advantage of it when it is there; but the copyists apparently did not trouble themselves about it one way or the other, and the readers in Lydgate's day were presumably able to sound it for themselves where it was needed.

Lines like the following can easily be altered into the regular type; and in many such cases it is quite possible that Lydgate did originally write them in the more expanded form; yet the majority of these lines are wholly characteristic and require no emendation.

- III. 2336. But off assent cast in yōur passage (casteth)
- III. 2755. A myhti duc callid Palantus (y-callid)
- III. 3192. He callid was god of marchaundise (the god)
- IV. 2367. Another thyng bookis specifice (as bookis)
- IV. 3654. For thei wer set Bochas doth deuise (as Bochas)
- IX. 2998. And in caas verray resemblable (verraily)

Compare also III. 4787, V. 850, VI. 1362, etc.

Sometimes it is hard to say whether a line ought to be scanned as type C or type D; for here the type depends entirely upon whether the first syllable is emphasized or not, a matter which the taste of the modern reader must decide in the absence of all knowledge of the niceties of speech-accent of the fifteenth century:

- I. 682. And in ther trust for they wer nat stable
- II. 1616. The and thi kyn no man may socoure
- II. 1617. Flessh skyn and bon houndis shal deuoure
- IV. 529. He shal be set of gold bornid briht (gold probably disyllabic)
- IV. 3727. To his encres which that myhte auaille
- V. 519. And wher that he in his tendre age

In many other cases where at first sight there might appear

need for another syllable, there is actually no need for it; the syllable is already there. And although we certainly do not know just how Lydgate read his lines and pronounced his words, the conjecture at any rate lies near at hand that there was, in addition to diæresis (as in *Piroides*, II. 2502; *circuit*, VII. 654; *deer* [O. E. *diðr*], I. 5125; *boy*, V. 2588; *day* (?) II. 3396, V. 2019; *weel*, IV. 1564; *heeld*, III. 2131; *clees*, VI. 2481; *dees*, V. 2700; *trees*, I. 540, II. 2619), an occasional resolution of one syllable into two, either by lengthening or by the quasi-insertion of an extra vowel-sound, especially before an *r* and *l* and *n*. This is wholly consistent with the thicker and more broken utterance which, in view of the analogous mode of speech, preserved to-day, apparently independently of dialect, by country people in parts of England and especially of Ireland, we may assume was prevalent in Lydgate's time and among his class. Examples of such lengthening or vowel-insertion are: *Saul* (*Sauël*), II. 167, etc.; *foul* (O. E. *fugol*), IV. 1742; *tail* (O. E. *taegl*), I. 854, IX. 1467; *soil*, I. 746; *gold*, II. 3452, etc. (see *infra*); *poynt*, VI. 2440; *reyn* (O. E. *regn*), I. 713; *Minotaur*, I. 864; *tour*, I. 1098, II. 1738; *repeir*, VI. 3201; *dispeir*, VI. 2433; *hair* (*hèir*), I. 5140; *boor*, I. 4918; *boord*, IV. 1332; *fir* (*fire*), I. 1417, II. 2111 (comp. *feer-brond*, I. 6388).

The consonant combinations *lk* and *lf* seem to have formed a syllable by themselves in *folk* (*follek*), I. 148, III. 148, 4051, 4425, IV. 2442, IX. 1819, 2970 (but *folk*, monosyllable, I. 806, IV. 3630, V. 12), *calff*, I. 6380, *halff*, I. 6378, *mylk*, IV. 1131, and on occasion in *self* (*him*, *her-self*). The letter *r* was evidently strongly rolled, or pronounced with a distinct burr, producing a disyllabic effect in such words as *world*<sup>1</sup> (*fem. i* stem), which, however, has an organic silent *e* in the dative and accusative, I. 793, 822, 6179, 6253, II. 2081, III. 3165, IV. 83; in the strong masculines and neuters, *hors*, III. 1842, 52, 2556, 2979;<sup>2</sup> *arm*, II. 952, 1521; *clerk*, IV. 2663, IX. 113; *werk*, I. 1125, 29, 39; *turn*, IV. 2863, VI. 584; in the French words *cours*, III. 2802; *court*, II. 2251, III. 4785, VIII. 2945, 76, IX. 2103; and *sort*, I. 2725; and in *first*, *erst*, -*for*n and *thoruh*.

In *kyng*, the *g* may have been pronounced separately as

<sup>1</sup> Comp. VI. 201, 2515, 2893 *wor-eldli*.

<sup>2</sup> In VI. 1369, "Vpon an hors wildere than a leoun," the *a* is omitted in MSS. B and H, showing that the copyist probably said "hor-es," if he pronounced the word at all.



a guttural following the *n* (see ten Brink, §120,  $\beta$ ), thereby producing an additional syllable that could be sounded or slurred at will. It is not at all probable that Lydgate added an *e*; yet the word is used in so many lines where two syllables are unquestionably required that it is difficult to believe that it was not indeed disyllabic:

- II. 1625. Off this warnyng the kyng took non heed
- II. 2937. The woful fal off kyng Amazie
- IV. 1800. And whan kyng Alisaundre hadde
- IV. 2390. And of the kyng of Epirothes
- VI. 1345. Which weddid was to kyng Tholome
- VI. 1681. So that the kyng Mitridate alas
- VIII. 3257. Of Gepidois how kyng Trusimounde
- IX. 903. This kyng caste the damages to redresse (apocope of the *s* in damages)
- IX. 2792. With kyng Iohn this Gaulteer lik a kniht

Other examples are: I. 5227, 5986, II. 1516, 24, 78, 2122, 2248, 2714, 3207, III. 2319, 74 2650, 2714, IV. 1552, 1863, 2340, V. 2968, VI. 1025, IX. 708, 924, 1287. Yet several of these are doubtful; we do not know but that Lydgate may have had the "broken-backed" line in his mind more often than is perhaps apparent to us now, and the following lines can be read very well with kyng as a monosyllable: II. 1665, 4107, III. 869, 4808, IV. 1461, 1944, 2981, V. 2409, IX. 865, 2956. On the other hand, kyng is certainly a monosyllable in lines III. 1705, 08, 39, 43, 2662, IV. 1315, 17, 78, VI. 1352, VIII. 2364, IX. 1285; and when it occurs at the end of a line it rhymes with the present participle (III. 1724, 4104, V. 2438, 3028, etc.).

To deth, str. masc., an *e* was probably added in the dative on occasion (pronounced dédē?); and examples of its dative use are comparatively numerous: I. 761, 5739, II. 2325, III. 2752, 4733, 54, IV. 722, 1083, 2062, 2133, 58, 3060, 3976, V. 2124, 2251, VI. 1163, 2550, 3618, VII. 56, VIII. 1044, 1434, 64, 1864, 2587, IX. 254. Of these lines, IV. 1083, "For of his deth no man list compleyne," and VIII. 1044, "Of whos deth Lycynus was glad," can be read as type D; and IV. 2062, "That for his deth tempred the poison," is a fine example of type C as it stands. Lines VI. 2087, 2504, and VIII. 1457 are of the normal type, requiring no *e* in the dative. The word occurs but seldom in the accusative case; but in lines IV. 1957, "Tauenge my

deth wrouht bi gret outrage," IX. 1515, "Tauenge the deth[e] of Andronicus," and IX. 2031, "His lyff his deth[e] put in iupartie," it may be considered to require two syllables.

In regard to *feeld*, str. masc., the indication is that it either took an *e*, when required, in both the dative and accusative, or was lengthened into *fe-eld*. There are many examples of its use: II. 2300, 09, 2648, 4358, III. 2103, 4914, IV. 222, 3652, 85, V. 324, 31, 2036, VI. 1871.

Wheel, str. neuter, was certainly disyllabic (Middle English spellings: *hweol*, *wheol*, *huezal*, etc.); compare nominative case, "Troy Book," II. 8561, and accusative, "Fall of Princes," V. 1145. An *e* may have been added to the dative, I. 2170, V. 2293, VI. 308, and in the "Troy Book," II. 2021; but I am inclined to doubt it, although in my indecision I added one in VI. 308. In lines VI. 703, 11, 2538 (dative), and IV. 2858 (accusative) it is all right as it stands.

Although *lord* is one of the masculines of the strong declension that sometimes takes an *e* in the dative in Chaucer (ten Brink, § 201), it is probable that it was also pronounced disyllabically *lau-erd*. It usually occurs in the accusative and nominative:

- I. 814. Was bi the Lord as hym list ordeyne
- I. 2790. Made hir lord at hir to disdeyne
- II. 1006. Also my lord bad I sholde abide
- II. 1936. Hadde slayn hir lord for his gret richesse
- II. 3426. Whan that his lord was be tresoun slayn
- II. 4542. And to that Lord bowwe down thi chyne
- III. 1984. Ful lik a lord and a knyhtli man
- VI. 1641. Was to his lord[e] fals & eek vnkynde
- VIII. 1879. Of his lord[e] be ful cruel hate

Compare also I. 6619, II. 196, VII. 1203, VIII. 881, 1674. In line II. 1930, *lord* is evidently monosyllabic; in IV. 1326, "Ageyn his lord bi an horrible cryme," the pronunciation of *lord* depends upon whether "bi an horrible" is elided or not: if we read "banorrible," *lord* is disyllabic.

In *kniht*, the *k* and the *n* were probably sounded separately, and the word was disyllabic (IV. 1924, VIII. 2845, 3231, IX. 642). *Hed*, str. neuter, was more likely pronounced *heved* than *hed[e]* when two syllables are needed; and although I have added an *e* in a few instances, it is rather to indicate that the word is disyllabic than to imply that Lydgate thought of

it otherwise than as heved. It occurs as a rule in the nominative and accusative:

- II. 3626. The speris hed rooff hym thoruh the herte
- III. 1762. Gropyng his hed[e] as he lai slepyng
- IV. 3892. His hed smet off in the same place
- VI. 1159. Lost his hed[e] & his lyff in deede
- VI. 2453. Took up the hed[e] of that prince alas

The str. neuters gold and child were also in all probability disyllabic, go-eld and chi-eld:

- II. 3452. He thouhte gold myhte hym most auaille
- II. 3474. Though he of gold hadde so gret plente
- II. 3790. Riche of gold perle and precious stonys
- IV. 529. He shal be set of gold bornid briht
- IV. 889. Of most fyn gold shon so cleer & briht
- VIII. 1269. Al of gold fret with perles fyne

IV. 3684, "Armed al in gold and with gret violence," is of type A, with gold a monosyllable. I prefer to read VIII. 3160, "Al is nat gold that is cleer shynyng," as type A rather than type D. In IV. 506, "Bies of gold crownes of laureer," we have the alternative choice of a disyllabic "gold" or a trisyllabic "c[o]rownes." There are numerous examples of child, which may have sometimes taken an *e* in the dative; we meet with it, however, most frequently in the nominative and accusative cases:

- I. 2104. She and hir child fill into the se
  - I. 3290. Hath maad this child now so fortunat
  - I. 3407. Is first a child which may nat suffice
  - I. 7037. Bad that the child sholde anon be take
  - II. 1582. Whethir the child sholde lyue or deye
  - II. 1808. Kepte this child in ful secre wise
  - II. 3100. To keepe the child was nat rekeles
  - II. 3103. How that this child greene & tendre off age
  - II. 3139. The yonge child took in ther depos
  - II. 3588. Because this child tendre yong & fair
  - IX. 2874. Sold hym a child which was<sup>a</sup>born in Ynde
- Dative:
- II. 3624. And on the child which that stood beside
  - II. 3627. But off this child whan the deth was kouth
  - VI. 1351. Was with hir child[e]? seruid that was slayn

In other cases the word is to be read as a monosyllable in lines of types A and D (I. 3192, 99, 3213, 19, 27, 31, 45, II. 1624, 3108).

Blood, birth, land, and swerd (which may have been otherwise disyllabic, swe-erd, O. E. sweord) occasionally take an *e*

in the dative; good (possessions) apparently requires an *e* in the accusative, III. 3853. To the str. masc. gilt an *e* was probably added, I. 6925, but not elsewhere (III. 2034, IV. 427, 3751); hill also seems to have required an *e* in the dative (II. 4122, III. 2973, V. 2601, VI. 1612, VII. 1054). Wal, I. 2479, II. 3510, certainly was pronounced wal[le] in the dative and accusative, VI. 1108 and IV. 339. To knyff, II. 1305, 84, III. 1147; doom, V. 875, VI. 2926; crafft, I. 6523, 41; drem (perhaps disyllabic, O. E.\* *dréam*), II. 3222, 3585, III. 1666, apparently no *e* was added. The consonant-stem noun book, however, seems to have been sometimes disyllabic through the addition of an inorganic *e* to the dative, I. 4076, V. 306, 804, VI. 2871, IX. 177, 3070 (acc., I. 258, 423, VI. 224), although some of these lines can be read as type D.

The French words estat, III. 534, VI. 2865, VIII. 2786; chaung, I. 2064; assent, III. 2336, IV. 3787, V. 2000, IX. 1349, 3232; feith, IX. 1223, 28; and accord, I. 3706, II. 4117, IX. 2218, also seem to have required an *e* in some instances.

So far we have been dealing with lines that require more syllables than they apparently possess; but there are many other lines that at first sight might be considered to have too many syllables. It is therefore necessary to examine shortly Lydgate's usage in slurring over and eliding syllables and otherwise contracting his words.

There is very frequent use of elision and apocope. Of the former the following are characteristic examples:

Lat us (Lat's), I. 938; it wer ('twer), II. 3648; Fortune is (Fortune's), IX. 3526; There is (there's), I. 2581, 4611, II. 3639, III. 3932; He enfectith, I. 4624; He abod, III. 816; He is, I. 6986, III. 1365; Heere is, I. 2596; She is, I. 6185; Wil is, III. 3980; and in (=nin), VI. 2825; bi his, VI. 2633; be Amilius, II. 3992; Bi Eneas, II. 987; be interpretacioun, VIII. 1940; be influent, IX. 3222; be exacciouns, VIII. 2638; be occasioun, IX. 350; Be Honorius, VIII. 2281; Bamaner, VI. 944; bagredi, VI. 1005; birfadres, IV. 3324; bextorsioun, III. 3231, this (=that is) II. 4040; so infortunat, I. 3470; so onable, III. 49; elision of the *e* in *the* before vowels and *b*, I. 1370, 2388, 5848, III. 2352, V. 373, VI. 2303, 04, 3428, VII. 1120, 1400, VIII. 3261; of the *o* in *to*, I. 5719, II. 684, 2289,

IV. 3996, VI. 3267, VIII. 2056, 2205, 2394, IX. 2030; glorie and, I. 1118, II. 1073, 2108, III. 3343; miserie and, I. 968; slaundre and, III. 3017; childre and, III. 2007; wynter and, III. 2204; fadir and, I. 900; childre in, VIII. 2363; fadir in, I. 194; rekne in, VI. 1745; other in, I. 2860; lettir in, I. 6344; rancour in, II. 785; thastlabre in, I. 295; peeple in, I. 996; Brothir of, VII. 1044; double of, VIII. 3152; double Apostata VIII. 1483; title of, VI. 3647; slauhtre of, VIII. 223; temple off, III. 3315; sobre of, I. 6208; enlumyned off, III. 666; chartre is, V. 1873; mekil is, III. 555; writen is, V. 1476; lauhtr on, I. 1528; Phebus on, VI. 2472; Capue he, V. 2049; leuer he, III. 3918; togidre he, III. 4568; peeple he, II. 215; ordre as, VIII. 2598; sugre eek, I. 4001; title had, VI. 732; Vttre hem, VI. 298; merci or, II. 1699; gredi excesse, VI. 1425; foure elementis, VI. 3398; walkyn appeere, V. 1000; peeple onhappi, I. 3864; furie unrestreynable, III. 4027.

Apocope is quite frequent of the endings *el* or *le*, *er* (*ir*, *re*), *w*, *we*, *uh*, in *narw*, *naruh*, *sorwe*, etc., *ed* in hundred and the past participle,<sup>1</sup> and of the *es*, *is* in plurals, especially of French words. Examples are: *bridle*, III. 4608; *litol*, III. 3088, IV. 2345, VIII. 421; *stable*, III. 1878; *nouthur*, IV. 1035; *sobre*, I. 3449; *remembre*, I. 3102; *fostre*, I. 3255; *hunger*, VII. 1353; *mooder*, I. 4811, 6185, III. 3980, IV. 151, V. 2940; *moordre*, VIII. 3372; *whethir*, I. 4653, 4658, 59, 61; *somer*, III. 2204, *mydsomer*, I. 3998; *holuh*, V. 2105; *sorwe*, I. 3532; *a-morwe*, III. 1524, 3825; *naruh*, III. 208; *folwe*, III. 1488; *hundred*, VIII. 2296, IX. 2081; *fadid*, VIII. 194; *weddid*, IV. 3968; *disclaundrid*, IX. 2445; *delyuered*, III. 3314; *corages*, I. 999, 2931, (rhymes "corages: language: visage," I. 5154); *offices*, I. 614; *deluges*, I. 1081; *pillages*, I. 6139, IV. 836, VIII. 2638; *pryncessis*, I. 1829, 3125, II. 4230, *trespacis*, I. 2911, II. 4582, V. 3109; *sciences*, I. 4246; *facis*, VIII. 3142; *ymages*, II. 834, 4497, V. 1440; *damages*, III. 2483, IV. 639, IX. 3023; *euidencis*, I. 3105; *toknes*, IX. 117; *prouynces*, III. 4867, VII. 1564, VIII. 698; *richessis*, III. 4240, 45, 4932, IV. 3924, VIII. 2596 (rhymes with apocopated "falsnessis, witnessis," V. 1661); *goddessis*, VII. 837, IX. 277, (rhymes with apocopated "witnessis, brihtnessis," IX. 282, with "heuynesis," IX. 293); *liknessis*, IV. 17; *paleisis*, VI. 1296.

<sup>1</sup> See V. 3021, where "exercised" rhymes with "deuse" and "guise."

Syncope also is frequent and often indicated by contractions. It occurs in the third and second person singular endings of many verbs, in the participle, in the plural of nouns ending in *es* (*is*), and otherwise in a very large number of words. Examples are: appallith, III. 1629; causeth, III. 4046; gynneth, III. 4547; komth, III. 1036; lakketh, III. 2275; makith, I. 1015, makth III. 70, maketh, III. 1628, 3235, 4209, VI. 1282; taketh, III. 533, 1235, 1625; tarageth, IV. 2930; yeueth, III. 397; holdeth, II. 531; preueth, III. 4035; declareth, II. 3462; bryngith, I. 1414; reuersith, III. 1462; setteſt, VI. 495; recurid, III. 1400; astonid, IV. 939; commaunded, IV. 427; namyd, I. 574; lokkid, VIII. 42.

In the plural of nouns: goddis, II. 4256, III. 3564, IV. 3708, 23, 37; innocentis, II. 4421; personys, III. 3607; myscheuys, VIII. 2626.

Other examples are: adamaunt, IV. 66; aduertiseth, I. 806; aduersite, VI. 1262, 1687, VIII. 3259, IX. 1845; antiquite, IX. 916; appetit, VI. 1319, appetites, VIII. 2404; auctorite, VI. 2242, VIII. 971, 2054, 2216, IX. 2171, 99, 2645; auisili, VI. 3356; bestialite, IV. 2687; cardynales, IX. 1087, cardynal, IX. 2100 (but cardinales, IX. 1077); cathedral, VIII. 2035; chapitle, I. 4499, VI. 1282; charite, VII. 1172, IX. 2400; cherisse, I. 997, 3840, II. 3146, IV. 1372, VIII. 2366, cherysshynge, II. 1096 (but cherissid, III. 4794); chronycle, I. 2607; ciseyns, IV. 3916; confederat, VIII. 2256; consuleris, V. 1956; contemplatyff, IX. 3413; corrupt, III. 967 (but corupt, VIII. 990); countirfet, VII. 1207; countirpeis, VI. 2893; couenable, III. 4006, VI. 618; delicat, VI. 1424; dilligentli, VII. 1324; disconfited, I. 5291, III. 2520, VI. 2132, VIII. 1055, 2511; disseuerance, III. 2814; disherited, I. 2563; dissymulynge, IV. 1306; enheritour, IX. 1252; enlumined, III. 666; emperour, VIII. 754, 1041, emperours, II. 4467, VII. 1264; felicite, I. 1834, III. 1153, infelicite, I. 3168; fauourable (slurred), IV. 990; felashipe, VII. 8; flaterers, III. 3164, IX. 2712; florysshynge, IX. 3446; gentillesse, IV. 2702; gouernaunce, V. 1770; gouernour, V. 1758, IX. 49; humylyte, IX. 2393; imagynatyff, VIII. 521; importable, VIII. 1579; impossible, I. 3835, VI. 1717; indigent, III. 4324; infirmytes, VII. 1256, IX. 1087; infortunat, IV. 3987; innocent, IX. 1493; ipocras, VII. 1282; laboreer, VII. 1198, liberalite, IV. 3994, libertes, IX. 2608;



mageste, IV. 3127; magnificence, IX. 3602; malencolie, III. 4026; malencolik, VI. 3442; martirloge, IX. 42; mellodie, VI. 344; merciful, VIII. 1204; meryly, I. 4795; modēfie, IX. 2615; mutabilite, V. 1823, VI. 399; myneral, VII. 1216; myracle, VIII. 1503, 1623; naked, VII. 1062; necessite, I. 4981, VII. 548; norice, III. 4278; notable, I. 1460, VI. 513, 891, 3630, VII. 84; occupied, VIII. 299; onchaungable, I. 1207; ordēnaunce, VIII. 933; origynal, IV. 1137; perished, IV. 22; pestilence, VII. 1353; philosophie, IV. 1139, VI. 345; philosophe, VI. 1303, 3120, VII. 1223; politik, VI. 347; polyshing, III. 1040; possible, VI. 3199; predecessours, I. 3910; prerogatif, VI. 3377; prerogatyues, VI. 3080; promyses, III. 4252; prosperite, I. 124, IV. 1052, 68, VIII. 2550, 2671; punysse, II. 1241, 1327, 4380, III. 1457 (but punyshe, III. 304, 1129, 1684, etc.); rethorik, VIII. 193; reuerence, II. 1966, IX. 2101; reuolucioun, VI. 189; salari, II. 3167; senatours, VI. 3104, 3226, VII. 543, VIII. 2539 (but senatours VIII. 223); sensualite, V. 1503, VI. 3381, VIII. 2350; seuē, III. 2530, 2651, 2702, 37, 4550, IV. 113; skarmyshe, IV. 292; souereyne, V. 1172; subtilite, V. 1609; syngulerte, III. 1280, 2258; synguler, I. 409, II. 4305, III. 2136, IV. 133, VI. 2209, 3004, 3140 (but synguler, IV. 3623); tragedie, I. 5519, 44; trynpte, IX. 2404; venymous, III. 4595; werreyours, VII. 1036.

Synizesis, the combination into one syllable of two vowels that can not make a diphthong, is frequent and often accompanied by slurring. Mariage is as a rule of two syllables = marage (I. 1988, 3483, 3752, II. 2121, III. 4112, 16, IV. 184, 3973, VIII. 3273, IX. 257, 63, 73, 83, 88, etc.); but we also have mariage in three syllables (I. 3500, 5462). Other examples are: cariage, V. 1931; alliaunce, V. 2450 (alliaunce, IX. 259); daliaunce, VI. 214, 3467; embassiat, V. 1545; meriere, I. 5813; permiable, VI. 2168; rhetoricien, VI. 3454; superfluite, VI. 2689, 3332, VII. 1307; tarieng, VI. 2737; variaunce, VI. 2893, 3399; vertuous, III. 4383, VIII. 127, IX. 1153, 2027, 3046 (but vertuous, VII. 399, IX. 2034).

There is synizesis of the *i* and *o* in the following adjectives: compendious, VI. 3630; contrarious, IX. 529; furious, I. 2388; gracious, IX. 3349; ungracious, VIII. 3273; victorious, II. 204, VI. 1209, IX. 2417.

The same applies to many nouns ending in *ioun*: accusacioun,

V. 1658; affecciou, III. 821; champiouns, IX. 2426; collu-siou, II. 4240, III. 1713; compassiou, III. 4812, VI. 276, 2996; composicioun, II. 766; condicioun, VI. 281; confec-ciouns, III. 2574, IX. 2907; coniuracioun, VI. 3052; conspiracioun, VII. 447, VIII. 3127; constellacioun, III. 3628; contencioun, IV. 436; desolacioun, VI. 362; deuocioun, IX. 2140; digressioun, III. 3228, V. 1776, VI. 2000 (but not in VI. 3330); dilacioun, I. 7053; discencioun, IV. 677; discrecioun, I. 503, III. 4627, IV. 2329, 4032, V. 1783; divisioun, III. 5122, VI. 2310, 2535 (but not so in lines I. 4611, VI. 358, 3329, and perhaps in IX. 511); dominacioun, VIII. 229, IX. 1507; ellocucioun, VI. 3334; entencioun, IV. 1365; execu-cioun, IX. 2982; extorsioun, III. 3231; exacciouns, IX. 2615; facioun, I. 5051; fundacioun, IX. 2427; generaciouns, VI. 3400; intrusioun, VIII. 2316; lamentaciouns, VI. 2384; men-cioun, III. 4941, VIII. 1174; obligacioun, IV. 1978; occa-siouns, I. 4736, in sing., IV. 1013; oppressioun, VIII. 1306; perfeccioun, IX. 798; pocessioun, VIII. 2891; presumpcioun, IX. 939 (but four syllables, VI. 3628); professioun, VIII. 1480, 2250; pronunciacioun, VI. 3140, 3340; refecciouns, VII. 904; religioun, IX. 2129; reuolucioun, VI. 189; subieccioun, V. 582; successioun, I. 4273, III. 2964; supplantacioun, IX. 3039; suspeccioun, III. 2728.

Synizesis also occurs in proper nouns, such as Albioun, VI. 2882; Amphioun, VI. 3491; Scipioun, V. 1249, etc.

Hiatus is comparatively rare, but nevertheless there are a number of cases where the final *e* is evidently sounded before a succeeding vowel, as in VI. 2461, "Bi fals rauyne and extor-sioun"; VII. 268, "The firste also who list take heede"; VII. 380, "And saide also mor for assuraunce"; VIII. 2395, "Brothir to force auctours seyn echon"; IX. 1044, "In suich disioynt the sayd[e] Arnold stood." There are other ex-amples in which the words "hoost" and "steel" with dative ending are followed by the word "armed."

In proper nouns the accent is often shifted from one syl-lable to another; sometimes a name is shortened by apocope, or, as we have seen above, by synizesis. Thus, Ypolitus reads Ypolitus, I. 4488; Róboam, II. 772, Róboám, II. 792; Ierusal-lem, II. 755, 1825, 2656, 83, but Ierusalém, II. 707, 1491, 2891, VII. 1458, IX. 1859, 1917, 57; Abithómarus, V. 957,



Abithomárus, V. 981, Abithómarus, V. 946; Lacedémóyn and Lacedémoyne, III. 3362, 77, 3439, 64, etc.; Pelopia, I. 4151; Odóacer, VIII. 2510, Oðacer, VIII. 2501; Anthióchus, V. 1523, 48, 2781, Anthióchus, V. 1590, etc.; Nabugodonosor, II. 3531; Artabanus, III. 2669, Artabanus, III. 2647, 92; Fanatícus, VI. 662; Tantalus, III. 3730; Diogenes, III. 4392; Macedoyne, V. 282; Laodices, V. 1473; Aristobolus, VI. 2742, 52; Constantynople, VIII. 2222; Alcibiádes and Alcibiades, III. 3375, etc.; Tholome and Tholome, VI. 2627, 48, 52; Artaxerxes, III. 5022, but usually Artaxerxes; Iubiter and Iubiter, III. 1660, VI. 3206, VII. 385, 551, VIII. 1001, 1004; Radagasus and Radagasus, VIII. 2143, 60, 62; Cesarea, VIII. 1733, Cesarea, VIII. 1747; Phebus, VI. 2472; Alisaundre, IV. 1428, etc.; Cleopatra, VI. 2648, Cleopatra, VI. 2643; Calligula, VII. 411, 86, Calligula, VII. 323; Antigonus, IV. 2264, Antigonus, IV. 2282; Galerius, VIII. 980, Galerius, VIII. 981.

It is exceedingly doubtful whether there are any lines with a trisyllabic first measure in the "Fall of Princes." Personally I am inclined to believe that there are none. Lines having the word "seven" in the second measure will hardly do, for seven, with the second *e* syncopated, was a monosyllable (I. 4255, IV. 1166, 1232). "Philisophre" was disyllabic through syncope of the second *i*, which puts IV. 1303 and VI. 3120 out of court (comp. also VII. 1223 and philosophie in IV. 1139 and VI. 345). In VIII. 1005, "In the capitoile set sothli as he saide," the first *i* in "capitoile" is syncopated; the line is regular. In the line, I. 4169, "Off the noble worthi kyng Agamenoun," "noble" loses its second syllable through apocope. The first *i* in "countirpeis," VI. 2893, is syncopated and the *r* slurred (comp. countirfet, VII. 1207); and in the only remaining questionable line of this sort that I have noted, VI. 3104, "In the Romeyn court affor the senatours," there is syncope of the *e* in "senatours" (for further references see senatour in list of words illustrating syncope).

There are several irregular lines, but whether the irregularity is due to the author or to the copyists is often impossible to say. Line 3480, Book III., "This was the mene that he mente," has only four beats as it stands, and may have been, but was probably not, so written by Lydgate. "Natwithstanding mor boldli that tyme atte leste" (VII. 962) has

evidently been garbled; VI. 991, "Sone of a carpenteer the stori tellith thus," has a beat too many unless the *er* in "carpenteer" is syncopated; and VII. 356, "With certeyn drynkis to cast hym in a rerage" (rhyming with age), apparently has one syllable too many as it appears in the MSS. There are many lines in which the accent is thrown on the definite article; but whether the practice was considered objectionable I cannot say. It is at any rate very easy to read such lines by slurring over the arsis, a practice not unknown in the poetry of the present day. The following are examples:

- I. 2172. To conside the successiouns
- I. 5663. Sterte into the welle and hymseluen dreyn
- II. 2924. Off mortal man the condicioun
- III. 1611. It is in erthe oon the moste pereilous thyng
- IV. 513. The straunge salaire and the famous guerdoun
- IV. 2846. And eclipsed the liht of his glorie
- VI. 94. Othir vndir the pool Antartik
- VI. 2307. Gan among Romeyns and the contagious fih
- VIII. 179. That laboure may of slouthe haue the victorie

In the following lines the accent falls on the indefinite article:

- I. 959. Suffred ~~on~~ a crosse deth and passiou
- I. 2332. The fir brast out a ful large space
- VI. 3187. In a desert and a gret wildirnesse

Finally, in some cases it is preferable to read a word in a shorter, but alternative, form to that which occurs in the text. Thus, Lydgate probably wrote "vauntage" rather than "auauntage" in III. 499, "It were to me no worshepe nor auauntage"; and in several lines, "geyn" is preferable to "ageyn." In VI. 2307 above, Lydgate may have written "mong." The copyists did not seem to care which form they used.

I have made the following emendations to the text without manuscript authority; but all except one (VI. 2459) are obvious and simple corrections of copyists' blunders and omissions:

- II. 423. Natwithstanding [that] the Palestynes
- II. 1732. Till al his blood be bledyng dede raile \* (The MSS. and prints have "fayle" instead of "raile," a blunder evidently of an early copyist.)
- III. 2906. Thei heeld hemsilff[e] verrai[ly] ashamed (The MSS. and prints have "verrai.")
- IV. 1627. And [he] hadde toward thoxident

- IV. 1972. Hir \* fatal wheel most dyuers & chaungable (The MSS. have "Ther" instead of "Hir," but the wheel is Fortuna's wheel.)
- IV. 2744. With al the vicis \* of pride & lecherie (The reading in the MSS. is "spicis," "spices," "spyces," and "spises" in Tottel.)
- IV. 2791. Callid [him] hom ageyn into ther toun
- V. 992. And of thes [noble] worthi princis tweyne
- V. 3141. Off this moordre[r] the hatful tirannye
- VI. 2459. Which thoruh the \* world yiueth so gret a soun (The MSS. have "thoruh al the world"; and it is possible that Lydgate so wrote the line, although he uses "al" in the preceding line.)
- VII. 1610. Of plate and maile [ther] armure was so fair
- VIII. 408. To this emperour I nil \* resorte ageyn (The MSS. have "wil" instead of "nil.")

# De Casibus Virorum Illustrium

## BOCCACCIO'S PREFACE TO HIS FIRST VERSION<sup>1</sup>

Exquirenti mihi quid ex labore studiorum meorum possem reipublicae vtilitatis adferre, mores hominum illustrium maxime obtulere sese obuiam: quos dum illecebres turpique libidine fœdos intuerer: effraenesque non aliter quam si fortunam in sopnum perpetuum soporassent hærbis aut cantato carmine: suosque principatus ferreis vncis adamantino in scopulo firmassent: aduerterem: Nec ob id solum cæteros pro viribus premere: quinimmo et in ipsum rerum omnium opificem stulta quadam temeritate consurgere cernerem: obstupui. Et dum damnarem dementia: longam quepii patris patientiam admirarer: Ecce in mentem incidit quod quærebam. Quid enim hac charitate auiditati mortalium et saluti perpetuæ vtilius: quam oberrantes si possis / in rectum tramitem reuocare? In quod & si hactenus eloquentissimi & sacra pietate conspicui viri persæpe conatu maximo elaborauerunt: Non inofficiosum existimo: si vt ipse (quamuis per viribus non sim) eos a sopore letifero inuitarem: vigiliam excussisse tentauerim. Sane quum tales oscenis voluptatibus adsueta difficiles animos demonstrationibus præstare consueuerint: & lepiditate historiarum capi nonnunquam: exemplis agendum ratus sum. Et quid deus siue (vt eorum more loquar) fortuna in elatos possit describere: Et (ne in tempus aut sexum cadat obiectio) a mundi primordio in nostrum vsque æuum consternatos duces: illustresque alios tam viros quam mulieres passim disiectos: in medium succincte deducere mens est. Absit tamen vt omnes dixerim. Quis enim mortalium tanti foret vt infinito posset labori sufficere? Set ex claris quosdam clarissimos excerpsisse sat erit, vt dum senes fluxosque principes et dei iudicio quasatos in solum reges viderint: dei potentiam: fragilitatem suam: & fortunæ lubricum noscant: & lætis modum ponere discant: Et sic aliorum periculo suæ possint vtilitati consulere. Porro ne continua historiarum series legenti possit esse fasti dio: morsus in vitia: & ad virtutem suasiones inseruisse quandoque tam delectabile quam vtile arbitratus: adnectam. Cui tam sublimi cœpto ac successui is quem penes potestas est omnis / supplex precor / sauens adsit: & in sui nominis gloriam quod scripsisse dederit ipse conseruet.

<sup>1</sup> From Jean Petit's edition [n.d., but after 1507].

## BOCCACCIO'S PREFACE TO HIS SECOND VERSION<sup>1</sup>

IN CASVS VIRORVM ILLVSTRIVM IOANNIS BOCATII  
DE CÉRTALDO HISTORIOGRAPHI CLARISSIMI PRÆFATIO

Exquirenti mihi, quid ex labore studiorum meorum possem forsā Reipub. utilitatis addere, occurrere præter creditum multa, maiori tamen ornatu in mentem sese ingressere principum, atque præsidentium quorum cunquē obscenæ libidines, violentiæ truces, perdita otia, auaritia inexplēbilis, cruenta odia, vltiones armatæ, præcipitesque, & longe plura scelestā facinora. Quæ cum ductu cælestium viderem in illo coercito freno euolantia undiquē, inde honestatem omnem fœdari publicam, iustitiæ sacratissimas leges solui, labefactari uirtutes omnes, & quod infandum est, detestandis exemplis, in mores impios ignaræ multitudinis ingenia trahi. Ratus eo me à fortuna deductum, quo appetebat intentio: festinus arripui calamum scripturus in tales. Nam quid satius est, quam uires omnes exponere, ut in frugem melioris uitæ retrahantur errantes, à desidibus sopitis letalis somnus excutiat, uitia reprimantur, & extollantur virtutes. Nec me terruit maiorum nostrorum in hos ingentia uidisse volumina, & illa nouisse styli suauitate, & pondere sententiarum meis literulis præponenda: plurimum eum meminerim, nonnunquē rudem notulam excitasse nonnullos, quos tonitrua mouisse non poterant. Bona igitur pace talium, quo impellit dicendi impetus tendam: si forsā saxea hæc corda, tenui spirītu oris mei, in salutem meam mollire saltem paululum queam. Sanè cum tales obstant, sueti voluptatibus animos difficiles demonstrationibus præstare consuerint, & lepiditate Historiarum capi nonnunquē, exemplis agendum ratus sum eis, quid Deus omnipotens, seu, ut eorum loquar more, fortuna in elatos possit, & fecerit. Et ne in tempus, aut sexum cadat abiectio, à mundi primordio, in nostrum usque æuum consternatos duces, illustresque alios, tam uiros, quam mulieres passim deiectos, in medium succincte deducere mens est. Absit tamen ut omnes dixerim. Quis enim mortalium tanti foret? ut infinito labori possit sufficere? Sed ex claris quosdam clarioresexcerpsisse satis erit. Vt dum segnes, fluxosque principes, & Dei iudicio quasatos in solum, reges viderint, Dei potentiam, fragilitatem suam, & fortunæ lubricum noscant: & lætis modum ponere discant, ut aliorum periculo suæ possint vtilitati consulere. Porro ne continua historiarum series legenti possit fastidium aliquod inferre, morsus in vitia, et ad virtutem suasionēs inseruisse quandoque, tam delectabile, quàm utile arbitraturs annectam. Cui tam audaci ceptui, & successui, eum quem penes maiestas est omnis supprecor, fauens adsit, & in sui nominis gloriam, quod scripsisse dederit, ipse conseruet.

<sup>1</sup> From Ziegler's edition, Augsburg, 1544.



# BOCCACCIO'S LETTER TO MAINARDO<sup>1</sup>

IOANNES BOCATIVS DE CERTALDO HISTORIAE 'HUS,  
MACHINARDO EX CLARA CAUALCANTIVM  
FAMILIA VIRO CLARISSIMO

Div strenve miles emvinctum ex ingenio meo opusculum, in quo virorum Illustrium tractantur casus, & ut plurimum infelices exitus, me penes ociosum fuit. Non enim satis mecum conueniebam, cui nam primo illud mittere uellem, ut nomini suo aliquid adferret ornatus: & eiusdem adiutus subsidijs, melioribus quam meis auspicijs prodiret in medium. Cupimus enim omnes, quadam vmbratili impulsu gloria, quibus auxilijs possumus, fragiles labores nostros nobilitare, & diuturniores facere: & scriptores potissime. Et inter alia, quasi multum illis splendoris consequuturum sit, Pontifici, seu Cæsari, aut Regi, uel alicui principi maximo titulamus eosdem. Quamobrem longa indagine mentis quæsiui, quem ex multis unum eligerem: & ante alios præpollentes mecum euoluere cœpi Pontifices, quorum vetus sanctitas, iamdudum plures, pia affectione, libellos claros reddiderat. Sane dum modernos, ex veteribus exorbitantes, (qui lachrymis, & orationibus in aduersantes deuotioni eorum, uirtutes coelorum mouere consueuerant) vidi ex sacerdotalibus infulis galeas, ex pastoralibus baculis lanceas, ex sacris uestibus loricas, in quietem, et libertatem innocentium commutare: ambire Martialia castra, incendijs, violentijs, Christiano sanguine fuso lætari: satagentesque aduersus veritatis verbum dicentis, Regnum meum non est de hoc mundo, orbis imperium occupare, horruui, retraxique pedem: ratus apud huiusmodi ludibrium potius opusculum meum futurum, quam ob aliquod eius meritum preciosum: & ab ijs frustratus, in hodiernum Cæsarem aciem mentis deflexi. Sed confestim reuocaui consilium, sentiens eum magnalium suorum immemorem, præponentemque Thebani Bacchi uina colentis gloriam, splendoribus Martis Italici, nec non torpentem sub Circio in extremo orbis angulo, inter niues, & pocula. Sed quid tandem? subiere pectus anxium, qui notis insigniti regijs, reges haberi uolunt, cum phalerati sint onagri: & ij potissime, qui hac tempestate præsident regnis. Occurritque primus Gallus Sicamber, qui se temerario ausu genere, & moribus præferre cæteris audet: & cui primates monstrauere sui, nedum philosophari turpissimum fore Regi, uerem literarum nouisse characteres, detrimentum Regiæ Maiestatis permaximum signari. Qui sic sapiunt, damnantes in Regibus, quod bellicosos reddit egregios. Inde Hispani, seu Barbari, & efferaces hoies affuere. Post & Seuerus Britannus, elatus nouis successibus. Sic et Pannonius Bilinguis populi multi-

<sup>1</sup> From Ziegler's edition.

tudine potius quam virtute valens. Postremo mollis, & effœminatus Siculus. Quorum omnium dum mores, & vitam segregatim intueor, ne per eorum discurram luxum, & inertiam, rectius regum simulachra, quàm reges uisi sunt, Quadpropter nausea quadam vexatus (ne in fabulam deducere, quod cupiebam extollere) ab indagine destiti: & quasi decreueram illud fortunæ manibus committere, et ferè iam emissurus eram, dum illi misertus Deus, in laudabile consilium incidi. Nemini scilicet quamtumcumque eminenti, atque præfulgido principi posse quiddam fidentius quàm amico committi: etiamsi extremæ fortis homo sit. Quod iampridem persæpe legimus illustres fecisse uiros. Et cum tali gratularer animaduertentiae, & ecce quasi tu missus in mentem uenisti. Tum ego mecum, quid inter syluestres beluas rugientes potius quàm loquentes, magistræ rerum philosophiæ hostes quæris, quod in sinu tuo optatissimum tenes, quod in oculis tuis assidue est, quod te coram semper obambulat? Nonne uides Machinardum tuum? tua iamdiu approbatum sententia: cuius fidem, dilectionem, cuius munificentiam sæpe expertus es. Quem ergo alium quæris? Nonne insuper huic sacra affinitate iunctus es? Secum si meminit, vnici filij eius communis pater es. Illi enim dedit ipse naturali lege ut esset, cum paraceto operante spiritu, ut bene esset dedisti, dum illum ex sacri fontis lauacro suscepisti. Præterea is, esto, plene philosophicis eruditus non sit, amantissimus tamen studiorum est, & probatorum hominum præcipuus cultor, atque eorum operum solertissimus indagator. Nec est, quod tu summopere uitare uidebaris, vnus ex mercenaria plebe, aut inglorius, & degener homo, regia enim militia insignitus est, & egregie splendido titulo: & ex Caualcantibus clara ciuitatis nostræ familia genitus. Ab auorum fulgore non deuiat, quinimo singulare decus, & pricæ virtutis specimen, nomen suum, & patriam laudabili fulgore reddit illustrem. Quid multa dixerim? a deo in sententiam hanc venisse placuit, ut quanto magis mecum ista reuoluerem, tanto arctius roboraretur consilium, et firmitus infingeretur animo. Tuo igitur, amantissime mi, dummodo pauperis amici munusculum non renuas, honorando semper nomini dico, quod paulo ante Regali insigniri cupiebam. Suscipe illud liberali animo, si quid sanctum amicitiae nomen, iamdiu inter te, & me æquo firmatum animo meretur. Quæso susceptum, dum per honestum ocium poteris legas, non equidem legisse penitebit, si satis ingenium tuum noui. Et inter legendum non pigeat minus decenter se habentia emendasse. Et dum uidebitur, post hoc, inter amicos communes, & postremo tuo nomine emittas in publicum, ut ipse pro viribus celebre nomen tuum, meumque aliquali fulgore, per ora uirorum discurrens, illustres. Vale.



# Des Cas Des Nobles Hommes et Femmes

LAURENCE'S TRANSLATION OF BOCCACCIO'S  
PREFACE <sup>1</sup>

[*This was retained in Laurence's second version.*]

Cest la translacion du prologue Iehan boccace ou liure des cas des nobles hommes & femmes maleureux, commençant en latin: Exquirenti michi quid ex labore, & cetera. [¶ Et enuoie son liure a vng sien compere cheualier appelle messire maguard des cheualchans de florence Senechal de Scicile ainsi comme Il appart par vne epistre surce faicte par le dit Boccace en la quele Il blasme et reprent ouuertement et a cause tous les princes crestiens.]<sup>2</sup>

Quant le enqueroye quel prouffit le peusse faire a la chose publique par le labeur de mon estude, le tournay mon engin a considerer les maintiens & les meurs des nobles hommes & femmes qui principalement se presenterent deuant les yuelx de mon entendement, & quant le les apperceu ordoyez en vains delictz & en plaisirs deshonnestes, le consideray Iceulx estre desroyes & sans fraing, ainsy comme se [ilz eussent endormie fortune par herbes ou par enchantemens ou ainsi comme se]<sup>3</sup> Ilz eussent fermees leurs seignouries a croz de fer a roche daymant. Et pource que ilz cuydient leurs seignouries estre fermes & perdurables, Ilz par leurs forces submarchoient non pas seullement les autres moindres hommes, mais le les regardoye enorgueillir & rebeller comme folz & oultrageux<sup>4</sup> contre dieu, le faiseur de toutes choses, dont le me esmerueillay; & quant le condamnoie lenragee folie de ces nobles hommes & femmes, & le comme esbahy consideroye la longue patience de dieu, le pere debonnaire, celle chose me vint en courage que le querroie. Certes le dis en mon cueur aucune chose nest pas plus prouffitable ne plus charitable a la communaulte des hommes & au salut pardurable, que de rappeler au droit chemin ceulx qui sont desuoyez se le puis, auquel rauoyement combien que aucuns hommes bien enlangagiez<sup>5</sup> & nobles

<sup>1</sup> From du Pré's edition, 1483, with corrections and additions from MSS. Royal 18. D. VII. and Royal 20. C. IV.

<sup>2</sup> From MS. Royal 18. D. VII.

<sup>4</sup> oultrageux] orgueilleux, du Pré.

<sup>3</sup> From the two Royal MSS.

<sup>5</sup> enlangagiez] alangagez, du Pré.

par aucunes saintes & doulces parolles y ayent traueille Iusques cy, toutesfois le pense que cest chose prouffitable se le me essaye oster telz hommes du somme qui est semblable a la mort & a les reueillier pour vitement ouurer, combien que le ne soye mie pareil aux anciens historiens. Et certain est que comme telz hommes desuoiez soient accoustumez de ensuiuir ordes delectacions, Ilz acoustumeront a grant peine leurs couraiges a ouyr les clers enseignemens de vertu, mais puis que Ilz ont acoustume de volentiers ouyr la doulceur des histoires Iay pense en mon cuer de demener mon present liure aulcunes fois par exemples, & de escrire quelle puissance ait dieu contre les orgueilleux qui appellent dieu fortune. Et affin que len ne doubte de quel temps ou de quelles personnes nous traictons en ce liure, nous respondons que des le commencement du monde Iusques a nostre temps nous voulons briefment demener & descrire en apert les fortunes & les cas daulcuns roys, ducz & [de] autres nobles hommes & femmes lesquelz fortune communement a abbaissiez<sup>1</sup> de leurs haultains esta[t]s, & si ne dis pas que le escripie de tous roys, ducz & autres nobles [hommes], car Il nest aucun engin si grant qui souffisist a si grant labeur & peine, mais des nobles hommes & femmes Il me souffist prendre aulcuns des plus nobles affin que quant les hommes verront par escript les princes du monde estre febles & vains, & les roys ferus & quotis Iusques a [la] terre par le Iugement de dieu, Ilz ayent congnoissance de la puissance diuine & de la feblesse et muablete de lestat de fortune, & que Ilz ayent mesure & attemprance<sup>2</sup> entre les bienuretez mondaines. Et affin que par le peril Iq adueni aux autres Ilz puissent pourueoir a leur mesme prouffit, & aussy affin que par continual racomptement des histoires le ne face ennuy a celui que ce liure lira: Iay determine tant pour prouffit comme pour delectacion de reprendre & blasmer les vices des personnes & de semer<sup>3</sup> & mettre en aulcuns chapitres admonnestemens pour viure selon vertus, auquel hault commencement & pour suite le prie humblement celui enuers qui est toute puissance quil me vueille estre fauorable & que Il garde & deffende ce que Il me ottoiera escrire a la gloire de son nom.

#### LAURENCE'S PROLOGUE<sup>4</sup>

##### *Le prologue du translateur.*

Selon raison et bonnes meurs lomme soy excercant en aulcune science speculatiue ou aultre, peut honnestement muer son conseil [ou propos] de bien en mieulx attendue la mutacion des choses, des temps, & des lieux, & aussy peut vng potier

<sup>1</sup> abbaissiez] abesiez, du Pré. <sup>2</sup> attrempance, du Pré. <sup>3</sup> finer, du Pré.

<sup>4</sup> From du Pré's edition. This is the preface to the second version.

casser & rompre aucun sien vaissel combien quil soit bien fait, pour lui donner autre forme qui luy semble meilleure. Et ceste licence de muer la chose en mieulx nest pas donnee a lomme pour seullement amender ou corriger sa propre oeuvre, ains mesmement est a chascun donnee pour ce faire en la besongne dautrui, mais que on le face par bonte de courage & par mouuement de pure<sup>1</sup> charite qui en soy ne contient enuye ne arrogance. Comme doncques la pieca le laurens de premier fait a lenhortement & requeste dalcuns euz translate de latin en francois le moins mal que le peuz vng tresnotable & exquis liure de lehan boccace, des cas des nobles hommes & femmes, en la translation du quel lay ensuyui precisement & au luste les sentences prinses du propre langage de lacteur, qui est moult subtil & artificiel, & Il soit vray que mesmes aucuns de ceulx qui se dient clers & hommes lettrez seuffrent en eulx tresgrant dommage dignorance qui leur aduient par deffaulte de trois sciences, qui enseignent droictelement, vrayement, & bellement parler, cestassauoir grammaire, logique, & rethorique, parquoy Il aduient que les liures latins ditez & escriptz par les philosophes, poetes, & historiens bien enseigneurz en toutes sciences humaines sont moult loing & desseruez de lentendement que dame nature donne communement aux hommes, [et] pource doncques [secourir a ce tres grant default il] conuient se me semble, que les liures latins en leurs trenslacions soient muez & conuertis en tel langage que les liseurs & escouteurs diceulx puissent comprendre leffect de la sentence sans trop grant & trop long trauail de entendement. Le doncques selon le Iugement<sup>2</sup> commun en amendant, se le puis, la premiere translation du dit liure vueil sans riens condamner autre<sup>3</sup> fois translater le dit liure. Affin cest assauoir que de tant quil sera plus cler & plus ouuert en sentences & en parolles, de tant Il delectera a lire & a escouter plusieurs hommes & femmes. Et par ce moyen avec laide de la grace diuine apres quilz congnoistront plus a plain la miserable condicion & le tourment & le muable estat des choses de fortune, Ilz les reputeront moins, ains les despriseront de tant plus & estimeront les choses diuines & celestes qui ont vraye seurete & loye pardurable. Et certain est que entre tous autres volumes escriptz par a[ul]cteurs historiens, ce present liure parlant des doulces & ameres fortunes des nobles hommes & femmes est de tressingulier prix & de noble exemple de vertus, car Il fait presque mencion ou en long ou en brief des histoires de tous ceulx & celles qui depuis le commencement du monde

<sup>1</sup> de pure charite, Royal 18. D. VII. and Royal 20. C. IV. Du Pré has "de oeuvre de charite."

<sup>2</sup> le Iugement] lentendement, du Pré.

<sup>3</sup> autre] vne autre, du Pré.

Iusques a Iehan roy de france, mort prisonnier en angleterre, ont eu puissances, richesses, dignitez, honneurs, & delectacions mondaines, car fortune a de coustume de abatre Ius & de froisser presque tous ceulx quelle a esleue au plus hault degre de sa roe; & par ainsy ce liure moult estroit & brief en parolles est entre tous [les] autres liures le plus ample & le plus long a le droit expliquer par sentences ramenables aux histoires, en faisant donc ceste beso[i]ngne longue, & espandue & recueillie de diuers historiens par le moyen de la grace diuine. Le vueil [principalement moy ficher] en deux choses cest assauoir mettre en cler langaige les sentences du liure, & les histoires qui par lauteur<sup>1</sup> sont si briefment toucheez que Il nen met fors seulement les noms. Je les assouuiray selon la verite des vieilz<sup>2</sup> historiens qui au long les escriurent. Et si ne vueil pas dire que Iehan boccace, a[u]cteur de ce liure, qui en son temps fut tresgrant & renomme historien, ait delaisse les dictes histoires par Ignorance de les non auoir sceues, ou par orgueil de les non daignier escrire, car Il les auoit si propices a la main & si ficheez en memoire, que Il les reputa communes & cogneues aux autres comme a soy. Affin doncques que le liure ait toutes ses parties et soit complet en soy, Je les mettray briefment sans delaisser que trespou le texte de lauteur. Si prie dieu<sup>3</sup> que a ceste oeuvre commencer, moyenner & finer, me vueille donner faueur & ayde. Et si requier les hommes que benigne-ment me suportent & excusent en moy donnant pardon des choses moins bien faictes ou dictes.

## LAURENCE'S DEDICATION TO THE DUKE OF BERRY<sup>4</sup>

[This appears only in Laurence's second version.]

A Puissant noble et excellent prince Iehan filz de Roy de france, duc de berry et dauguerne, Conte de poitou, destampes de boulongne & dauuergne, Laurens de premierfait, clerc et vostre mains digne secretaire et serf de bonne foy, toute obe-  
dience et subieccion deue comme a mon tresredoubte seigneur et bienfaicteur, et agreablement recepuoir le labour de mon estude et benignement excuser la petitesse de mon engin au resgart de la grant besoigne de vostre commandement par moy ia pieca entreprise et nouuelement finie. ¶ Combien que par vostre especial mandement Je aye soubz la confiance de vostre naturele benignite et en espoir de uostre gracieux aide

<sup>1</sup> lauteur] les acteurs, du Pré.

<sup>2</sup> vieilz] haulx, du Pré.

<sup>3</sup> dieu] a dieu, du Pré.

<sup>4</sup> From MS. Royal 18. D. VII. (R), fol. 2, ff., with a few corrections from MSS. Royal 20. C. IV. (R 2) and Add. 18,750 (Add.)

et confort entrepris le dongereux et long trauail de la trans-  
lacion de vng tresexquis et singulier volume, des cas des nobles  
hommes et femmes escript et compile par Iehan bocacce de  
Certald, Iadis homme moult excellent et expert en anciannes  
hystoires et toutes aultres sciences humaines et diuines. Neant-  
moins pour lexcellence de celle ancienne Royale lignie dont  
vous prenes naissance, et aussi de la noblesse de voz meurs  
et uertus qui a bon droit desseruent pardurable beneurete  
enuers dieu, et enuers les hommes louenge et renomnee. ¶ Ia  
long temps a que en obeissant a voz commandemens le tournai  
mon courage, a Iceulx acomplir ainsi comme le doy. Cest  
asauior a translater en langaige francoys le volume dessus  
dit, contenant en latin neuf liures particuliers racomptans ou  
en long ou en brieu les malheureux cas des nobles hommes et  
femmes qui depuis adam et eue, les premiers de tous hommes  
monterent ou hault degre de la Roë de fortune, iusques au  
temps de tres excellent et noble prince Iehan, le premier de  
ce nom, vostre tres loyal pere, Iadiz Roy des francoys, du  
quel le cas tresbriefment raconte, fait la fin de ce present volume.  
Et pource donques que ce present liure est intitule des cas  
des nobles hommes et femmes, et que les cas semblent auoir  
dependance et cause efficient de par fortune, ie veul premiere-  
ment et en brieu selon mon aduiz yci dire la cause pour quoi  
toutes les dignites et honneurs, richesses, puissances et glo[i]re  
mondaines<sup>1</sup> samblent estre et soient subiectes a fortune, qui  
tousdiz tourne sa Roë en transmuant les choses de ce monde.  
Et apres ie diray vne prouuable maniere par quoy chascun  
homme et femme puissent eulx affranchir et exempter des  
cas et des trebuschets de fortune.

¶ Pour quoy choses mondaines sont subiectes a fortune.

¶ Pour declarer donques la premiere de ces deulx choses:  
Sauoir affiert que au commencement homme et femme furent  
de dieu creez avecques entiere beneurete et telement parfaiz  
tant en corps comme en ame, que neiz les sages croient que  
adam et eue, parens de tout humain lignaige, estoient immortelz  
et impassibles se il[z] eussent bien gardeee celle sainte et seule  
loy que dieu leur ot donnee ou paradis de delices. Maiz pour  
ce que contre eulx maismes esquelz estoit toute humaine nature.  
Ilz getterent vng hazard par lequel ilz perdirent les princi-  
paulx doarres<sup>2</sup> tant de corps comme de ame. ¶ Lenfraise  
et le contempt<sup>3</sup> de celle seule loy entre les innumerables mau-  
x et infinis dogmages en engendra vng tres grief, par quoi toute  
hu[m]aine creature<sup>4</sup> deuint subiecte a fortune et a sa moquerie.  
Car deslors dieu souffri que les choses du monde qui atous  
estoient pareillement communes de uindrent propres selonc

<sup>1</sup> mondaine Add., R 2.

<sup>2</sup> douaires R 2, Add.

<sup>3</sup> contempt R 2.

<sup>4</sup> nature R 2, Add.



la couuoitise de celui qui par violence et force les occupoit pour soy. Et pource que tous les couraiges des hommes au regart de leur premier commencement sont tous semblables, lun couuoita celle mesme chose que lautre occupoit. Maiz pource que deulx ne peuent ensemble possider vne mesme chose, Il a couuenu que lun dechiee de son desir. Et celui qui obtient ce que il desiroit semble estre iuchiez<sup>1</sup> ou hault degre de la roe de fortune, qui comme chamberiere de dieu pour la punicion de leurs pechies, vne foiz haulse et autre foiz abaisse hommes et femmes sans discreccion ne aduiz et non pas selon la quantite des merites des hommes. Maiz par vne confuse maniere dont les causes sont euidens a dieu. Maiz les hommes comme ignorans de lordrenance diuine ne peuent congnoistre telles causes. Quant donquez lomme par quelconque moien monte du bas estat ou hault on lappelle beneyreux, Et le descendement on le appelle ou cas ou malheurete puis que celui qui descent sefforce au contraire et que cest maulgre soy. Par quoy cestui liure est apelle des cas des nobles hommes et fenmes. ¶ Et comme donques iuste punicion ait este cause par quoi les hommes et les biens de ce monde furent et sont soubzmiz a fortune et a sa moquerie, en tant que les estatz de toutes choses mondaines sont enfermes et soubdainement muables, et en espical des haultes choses trop plus que des moyennes. En la punicion des deulx premiers parens qui orgueilleusement enfreingnirent la loy a eulx donnee, la iustice de dieu fut estroitement et droictement gardee parce que tous participent la moquerie de fortune qui se loue en esleuant et en trebuchant les hommes. Car puis<sup>2</sup> que adam & eue mistrent en rafle toute la bienheurete humaine en cuidant icelle agrandir et en desobeissant Il[z] perdirent leur chance, Ilz deslierent a tous le malheur que auoit atachie dieu a vne forte coulompne et soubmistrent eulx et toute leur succession aus tournoiemens de la roe de fortune et a ses trebuchetz. Il[z] ouurirent les portes a tous pechies. Il[z] dechacierent de ce monde les uertus et geterent en terre la semence de tous vices que lamais neussent este nommez ne congneuz entre hommes. Et ainsi comme toute nature humaine estoit a donc en deux, adam et eue, qui par leur franc arbitre hazarderent toute leur beneinete,<sup>3</sup> aussi nous tous descendus deulx sommes par droit compaignons de celle perte. Car se il[z] eussent gaigne et actaint la chose aquoy il[z] tendoient, chascun en vouldist estre compaignon et parsonnier. Aulcuns par aduerture sebahissent pour quoy tant de nobles hommes et femmes cy apres racontes chayrent si miserablement du tres hault au tres bas. Et mesmement alain le pouete se complaint, pource que les iniustes et mauues hommes sont tres souuent esleues

<sup>1</sup> enchiez Add.<sup>2</sup> depuis Add., R 2.<sup>3</sup> bienheurete R 2.

aux tres haultx estatx du monde. Et a ces deulx pointz, Alain respont vraiment et embrief, Cest assauoir, que fortune les esleua en hault afin quil[z] descendissent par plus grief trebuchet qui les desrompe & froisse selon la pesanteur de leurs iniquites; puis donquez que iay briefment monstre que les cinq dons de fortune qui contiennent tous les biens mondains et transsitoires sont droittement par ordrenance diuine soubz mis a fortune et a sa moquerie. Le vueil monstre cleres voyes et manieres par les queles tant hommes comme femmes puissent eulx et leurs choses exempter et affranchir des cas et de trebuchetz de fortune.

**Comment lomme affranchist soy et ses choses de fortune.**

Et pource que ceste matere est dongereuse et obscure enuers aucuns, premierement ie suppose pour uray que se les biens de aucun homme ne lui semblent tres grans et tres larges il est meschant et poure combien que il feust seigneur de tout le monde. Et celui est homme malheureux et poure qui selon sa droicte conscience ne iuge soy estre bienheureux, la soit ce que tout le monde feust soubz sa seignorie. Et cellui nest beneureux ne parfait qui par son propre Iugement ne le cuide estre, Et riens ne vault se aucun reputé soy beneureux qui est plain de richesses, se il vit et ait uescu deshonestement et mal, et celui na en soy aucune felicité qui est seigneur de maintes choses, Maiz il est serf de plusieurs. ¶ Ces cinq choses dessus dictes ne cheent lamaiz en homme sage. Se donques homme veult soy affranchir et exempter de malheur Il lui conuient auoir la uertu de sapience qui en soy seule contient tous biens sans commixcion de mal. ¶ Le sage homme est en soy si parfait et si bienheureux que neiz pour bien viure Il na besoing Iamy.<sup>1</sup> Le sage nest point subget a fortune, comme Senèque le preuue par vne exemple de demetrius ancian Roy de Surie, qui par tyrannie occupa main[t]s pays et ardi maintes Cites de parthie et de oriant. En lune des cites de parthie estoit adonc vng moult sage philo[s]ophe nomme Stilbon, qui auoit femme, enfans, possessions et aultres Richesses temporelles. Toutes ses choses furent arses, perdues & degastees par le tirant Demetrius et ses gens. Maiz Stilbon tout seul eschapa bienheureux. Or aduint<sup>e</sup> que demetrius lui demanda sil auoit perdu aucunes siennes choses, et il vraiment et sagement respondi, quil nauoit riens perdu, aincois dist: tous mes biens sont auesques moy. La responce de Stilbon fist doubteux le tirant en tant que Il cuida que stilbon leust vaincu, pour ce que il dist toutes mes choses demeurent auecques moy; et uerite disoit, car auecques lui estoient les uertus Iustice, prudence, magnanimite, attemprance<sup>2</sup> et la doulce memoire de ses uertueuses oeuvres continuees sans les queles aucun ne

<sup>1</sup> Iamy] damy R.

<sup>2</sup> attemprance] attremprance R.



puet Iuger soy estre beneureux. Car homme indigne et mauuaiz ne puest auoir sentement de iuger soy estre beneureux. Ains conuient que tous iours et nom pas en pou de temp quil ait bien uestu selon le droit iugement de soy mesmes. ¶ Et aussi Il nest homme aqui ces choses ne déplaisent fors que au sage. Car toute folie et aussi chascun fol engendre souuent a soy mesmes desplaisir et ennuy.

Comment lacteur parle du cas de leglise presente et des prestres.

Helas, las, et troys foys las, par faulte de ceste sapience, mere et nourrice de toutes vertus diuines et humaines cheirent Adam et eue, et par eulx est toute leur succession habandonnee au cas & trebuschetz de fortune. Quelz cuers tant soient durs pourroient soy abstenir de douleur? Quelz yelx tant soient secz se porroient soi abstenir de larmes quant les hommes voient clerement et congnoissent les cas ia aduenus des troys estatz du monde? Cest assauoir, des prestres, des nobles hommes, aussi des laboureurs de cestui temps. ¶ Car quant aux prestres qui par crasse ignorance ne congnoissent eulx estre cheuz de leur ancianne beneurete. Le di, sauue la paix, des bons que ainsi comme dame chastete qui est la singuliere et souueraine beaulte des femmes apres le temps du iuste roy Saturnus. Chai et tomba ou temps de son filz Iupiter Roy de Crete par les excès et superfluités qui suruindrent en delicieuses viandes en a tours orgueilleux et sumptueux baptissemens de maisons et en aultres adminicules seruans a seule deshonneste delectacion. Aussi lancianne sanctite des prestres est cheue et versee par la trop grant habondance de Richesses mondaines qui soubz vmbre de la saintite de iesus crist et de aulcuns siens disciples ont este donnees aux prestres par aulcuns princes mondains qui a aulcuns les tollirent pour les donner aux prestres ausquelz il vaulsist miex selon lancienne saintite viure des saints decimes qui sont deuz par droit diuin que eulx voultrir et pourrir de dens orgueilleux palays ou fiens des pechies avecques leurs grans et dommageuses richesses. ¶ Helas, noble et excellent prince, ne doit len bien gemir, douler et plourer le cas et le tombement des prestres de cestui temps, qui en tout ou en partie forsignent et desuoient de la sante des anciens, qui par leurs larmes et oracions soloient mouuoir dieu et les uertus des cieulx contre les aduersaires de la foy catholique. ¶ Les sains prestres anciens sont en leurs successeurs telment dessaintiz que maintenant len forge heaulmes de mittres, len fait lances des croces, len fait des uestemens sacerdotalz haubergons, plattes et aultres pieces darmes baitailleresses pour trauailler et asseruir les hommes simples et innocens. Les prestres de cestui temps poursuient armes et pauillons, il font [l]arsins et violences pupliques; Ilz ont plaisir et loye despandre sang humain; Ilz sefforcent de occuper

la seigneurie du monde contre la sentence du vray iesus, filz de dieu, disant en leuuangile, que son Roiaulme nest pas de cestui monde. ¶ Les prestres en cestui temps emplient les sales des roys, les palays et les tables en delaisand leurs eglises, dont ilz se nomnent espoux. Ilz delaissent les choses saintes et poursuient les prophanes; Ilz sont pastours sans paistre ne congnoistre les brebis: Eulx que leglise fist nobles excercent vilz offices; Ilz desseruent par procureurs et vicaires qui deux foys tendent les simples brebiettes: La premiere tonture est aux vicaires, et la seconde est au pastour surnomme. ¶ Par le bannissement de celle ancianne saintcite, Cern malheureux cas sont aduenus, car le deable qui par les merites de la mort du bon iesus et de ses victorieux martirs et glorieux confesseurs auoit este loies en labisme denfer par les nouueaux pechiez des nouueaux prestres, et du simple peuple qui est adheurtés en leur oeuvres, est ia pieca des loie et sailli hors denfer. Et ia defait comme loup violent et forsene atraict a soy, las moy tresgrant partie des brebis commises en la garde du bon pastour S. Pierre, par quoy le bon iesus, vray espoux et pastour de sainte eglise, a retiree sa main du gouuernement de elle. Et est ia en vostre temps la chose atant venue, par le pechie principalment des prestres, et secondement du peuple que par eulx la loy *christianne* est presque perie maintenant. La Robe de iesus sans piéce et sans cousture, a este, par xxxij ans trenchee en deulx, puis en troys pieces. ¶ Et ou saint et noble corps deglise dont iesus est le seul chief sont seurcreues troys testes a maniere de ung monstre. Et ne remaint que a trespou, que ia nef de saint pierre ne ait este absorbie et noiee es floz de lamer de ce monde par le uice des nantonniers qui la deuoient tenir ou port de repos et de seurte. En brief, content le cas de leglise militant, excellent, noble et puissant prince, le prie humblement vous et tous aultres que uous me excuses benignement. Car le entens dire sobrement les choses que vous et Cent Mil hommes aues veues et vncores voyez: et le assez le voy se lay sentement ne memoire. Et pource ie ne allegue aulcuns autteurs ne liures, car ces paroles ont fontaine et naiscence de vne familiere epistre escripte par Iehan Boccae, premier aucteur de ce liure. En celle epistre Il pleure & regrette le cas de mondaine noblesse.

**Laucteur parle du cas de noblesse mondaine.**

O dist il, bon dieu de sapience qui tout sces et congnoys, enseigne moy, le te prie, en quele partie du monde soit reposte noblesse dont les empereurs & roys portent les tiltres principaulx? car le layquise en lostel de Cesar Roy des Rommains, de qui les ancesseurs par longs labours et par exquisés diligences et par nobles oeuvres de victorieuses armes iadis conquistrent la monarchie du monde. ¶ Maiz las moy, lai trouue que lempereur de ce temps a oublie, ou au moins il dissimule,

les proesses et loanges et les magnifiques besoingnes de ses predecesseurs. Il a laissie le glorieux estude de Mars<sup>1</sup> le dieu des batailles et sest du tout adonne a bachus le dieu du vin; Il a delaissie la riche, ancianne et notable Italie es mains de mil tirans, et sest ale repondre & dormir entre les naiges et grans hanaps de vin en celle part dallemaigne qui gist au coste destre deuers soleil couchant ou derrain anglet du monde. ¶ O las, bon dieu, com poure miroer de noblesse, quel exemple de cheualerie pour les roys et aultres princes du monde quant il[z] voient fetardie, peresse, oysiuete et entonnrisseur en celui qui deust a l'exemple de soy en horter, esmouuoir, semondre et esueiller les autres princes a maintenir et deffendre les conquestz de leurs noblez ancestrez et a Iceulx amplier<sup>2</sup> et accroistre. Du corps de lempereur ainsi comme ou soleil soloient liure et resplendir toutes uertus qui appartement se monströient par nobles euures dehors les vertus soient de corps ou de courage, qui ne monstrent au dehors leurs propres oeuvres ne rendent homme plus noble ne que la lune enlumine le monde quant la terre sest mise entre le soleil & la face de la lune. ¶ O noblesse mondaine, fille des nobles meurs & nourrie du lait des saintes vertuz qui est celui qui ta vanny des hostelz voiaux, & aussi des aultres princes? Tu respons que longuement tu habitas nomme comme hostesse en hostel des roys francoys, et que illenc volentiers demouroies, maiz que icelle erreur cessast parquoy aucuns folement cuiderent & encore dient que seulement ce nest pas laide chose a vng roy congnoistre les figures des lettres, maiz il cuident et dient que cest tresgrant empirement de maieste Royale. Maiz telz hommes sont folz qui ainsi dient et qui condempnent telle chose es Roys, parquoy les hommes ignobles sont droittement anoblis; car droit office de Roy et daultres princes est chacun iour seoir en siege iudicatoire, ouir paciemment et sagement examiner les merites des causes sur les controuersies de leurs hommes subgetz, et rendre droit aux parties selon balance de iustice. ¶ Deffendre les Innocens et punir les mauuaiz, procurer principalement le puplique prouffit, et apres le bien priue que len appelle demaine pource que il vient des mains et du labour du peuple en la main du prince, qui de sa puissant main doit garder et deffendre le peuple Impotent. Et certes clere chose est, que office royal ne puest homme sans science et sans art droittement [conduire et] excercer, Ainsi comme vng patron de nauire ne puet bonnement condu[i]re en mer tempestueuse et vndoiant vne grant nef sans gouuernail, sans voile, ne sans remmes. ¶ Et auoir en tour soy hommes lettres et nobles commis en offices publiques, ne monstre pas asses plainement la sapience ne la noblesse du roy, ou daultre prince, se il mesme nest lettres et expert en

<sup>1</sup> de Mars] maiz R.<sup>2</sup> amplier] employer R.

oeuvre de sapience et en discipline darmes, cest vng corbiau vestu de plumes de paon. Et prince sans lettres se assort a lasne qui coronne porte, Et sil nest aulcun homme bon iuge fors que es choses que il congnoist lamaiz archier ne tire droit sa flesche, se il na aulcun signe deuant soy. ¶ O dieu, quel grant louenge et beneurete seroit a vng roy ou aultre prince congnoistre les causes de toutes choses avec celle noblesse se aulcune soit que viengne aux enfans de par leurs peres. Car ainsi comme vng iardin con plante de diuerses especes darbres & herbes flories et oudourans est plus noble et plus precieulx, aussi sont enfans de nobles hommes qui sont nourris entre les fleurs des sciences & odeurs des vertus, et qui ont longuement este repeuz des fruitz. Attendu que noblesse nest pas hereditaire; car elle prent naissance de vertuz et bonnes oeures; Et combien que en punicion du pechie des premiers parens Adam & Eue seruitute par souffrence de dieu soit introduicte entre les hommes, en tant que les aulcuns seruent et les aultres seignorient nompas selon droit naturel ne ciuil, maiz par le droit des gens qui contient douze choses, dont seruitute est lune, neantmoins aulcuns nobles de ce temps sont si descheus de lestat de uraye noblesse que follement Ilz cuident eulz et non aultres estre hommes et que ilz puissent faire pareillement toutes choses permises et deffendues sans encourir ne diffame ne peine combien que il soit aultrement. ¶ Car tout vice de courage est plus griefment a punir de tant comme le pecheur est en plus grant degre. Et se dieu sage et iuste seuffre et veult que les roys et princes et aultres nobles aient espee de puissance sur leurs subgetz Il toute uoies ne veult quilz excercent fureur ne cruaulte, car aux nobles principalement affiert auoir clemence qui met equitte deuant rigueur et veult plus encliner a merci que a uengence sans faillir hors des termes de iustice, sans laquelle Roys ne sont roys ne royaulmes. Ains sont tirans cruelz et tyrannies. ¶ Par ainsi donques appert que le plus grief cas et le plus dampnable trebuschetz de noblesse cest forsbanir et dechassier sciences et vertus de lostel des roys, et aultres princes ainsi comme il aperra clerement par le compte des cas des nobles malheureux descriptz en ce present volume.

**Ci parle lacteur du cas des laboureux champestres.**

Or vienge a dire le cas des saintz laboureurs et tresbien fortunes, Maiz que ilz aient congnoissance de la quantite des biens que fortune leur donne. Et certes, puissant, noble et excellent prince, es choses dessus dictes en ce present prologue Iusquez yci len me doit tenir pour racompteur des paroles de Iehan Boccace en vne sienne familiere epistre: et chacun aussi congnoist la verite des deux cas de prestrise et de mondaine noblesse. ¶ Maiz quant au tiers cas present parquoy ie vueil monstrier le tresbuchet des laboureurs, et de la chose rustique.

Le prens uirgile pour mon auteur et maistre. Aulcun donc ne se merueille se le dy que lestat des laboureurs et de leurs choses ait este et soit sujet au cas de fortune: Combien que commun prouerbe soit *que* aulcun homme ne chiet, fors celui que siet en hault. Car en toutes choses sur quoy enuie gette ses yeulx dame fortune y entreprennt seignourie, la soit ce aussi que lendieque laboureurs sont de si bas estat que fortune ne les pourroit abaisser. Maiz sauue la paix de ceulx qui ainsi dient car se les laboureurs et leurs choses rustiques feussent ou [en]corez soubz celle beneurete et franchise en quoy Iadiz il furent et oncorez deussent estre selon les loyx anciennes approuuees diuines et humaines, Il nest aulcun aultre estat qui ait en soy teles excellances en *profis* en delitz et en honnestetes publiques et priues comme la vie et lestat des laboureurs, par qui les hommes sont soustenus et nouris en necessite de corps et les sacrifices diuins sont admenistres selon la religion publique. ¶ O bon dieu, quant Iadiz les cites tamboissoient par discensions, riotes et batailles cruelles, quant chastiaux et chastelains guerroient les vngs contre les aultres. Adonc les laboureurs contens de leurs propres biens viuoient et delectable et continuelle paix en mutuelle amour sanz souffrir aulcun *dommage*, rapine ou violence, ne en corps ne en biens: On laissoit iadiz cites murees et chasteaux assiz sur roches pour eschapper mesaises et perilz qui illenques souruenoient, Et venoit len aux villaiges ouuers et bas assiz pour y trouuer aisances et seurtes, Et pour auoir mon dit en labourages terrestres sont prouffilz et delectacions Innumerables si haultement descriptz et racomptes par tulle, noble orateur rommain, en son liure de vieillesse lequel vous auez comme ie croy oy diligemment et entendu, que ie nen vueil presentement escripre, Maiz le vueil neantmoins auec vostre bon plaisir plourer apres vous les cas des saintz laboureurs de la chose rustique pource que la chose <sup>1</sup> publique et la religion de vostre noble couraige se doit moult encliner a secourir aux choses tres domageuses aux hommes detestables enuers dieu. ¶ Las moy bon dieu, quele moquerie, quel monstre en bonnes meurs, quel abuz de iustice est ce maintenant veoir les hommes laboureurs, simples innocens sans cruaulte et sans armes, qui nuit et Iour demeurent en poures maisonnettes si sobrement, repeuz et vestuz de leurs propres labours que a paines Il appaisent la faim, et de vilz palestreaux Il cueurcent leurs membres recourbes et frossiez par continuel labour, Ilz qui purement nourrissent leurs femmes et enfans afin de les endurcir aux saints labours de la terre, Il[z] departent tout le temps de leur vie en trois pars: Premièrement a dieu seruir en prieres et sacrifices, a tirer par continuel labour des boyaulx de la terre toutes choses

<sup>1</sup> chose] pitie Add., R.



necessaires a la vie, Et a multiplier par leurs saintz mariages succession de lignie. Certes en ces iij choses na riens qui ne soit accordant a la loy diuine et humaine. La vie des laboureurs champestres droittement examinee et congneue sambla tele aux ancians nobles hommes, philosophes et princes quilz instituerent par editz et par loix que ce lui seroit repute et pugny comme sacrilege qui offendroit et rauiroit leurs labours ou leurs biens feust en champ ou en ville. Et pource furent ilz et oncores sont appellez saintz. ¶ Mais, puissant, noble et excellent prince, escoutez sil vous plaist le miserable cas de ces laboureurs et de leur chose rustique aux quelz se par vous ou aultre aiant puissance, volente et sagesse nest briefment secouru et pourueu en vostre temps, de remede couuenable. Dieu, qui ne het<sup>1</sup> aulcun et qui de tous a merci et en especial des bons simples laboureurs et aultres hommes iustes, Il retirera sa main a sa beniuolance des prestres et des nobles qui ne gardent misericorde, ne Iustice enuers eulx, ne enuers les aultres. Ains les soubz marchent et foulent. Il aduenra que dieu leur osterá, Raison dentendement, honneur de ancian estat et les vestira de confusion. Il espressira les tenebres de leurs yuelx; Il mettra trebuschetz a leurs piez afin quilz cheent du tres hault au tres bas. ¶ Il ramenra a neant ou transporterá en aultres mains leurs orgueilleuses richesses, honneurs, gloires, dignites et puissances. Ie ne vous persuade ne admonnesté pas car vous aduisez asses par les yeulx de vostre pensee & ceulx de vostre corps, quele et com grant iniquite, seu[e]r[i]te et austerite ce soit voir les simples laboureurs proufitables a tous et nuisans a nul homme estre par apperte violence [oppresses et] dechasses de leurs propres<sup>2</sup> maisons, mutiles, batus, Iniuries de fait et de paroles; leurs fames a hontages, leurs filles corrompuees, et leur aultres choses transglouties et gastees ou mises a rampson par les nobles hommes darmes de ce temps, ausquelz les roys et princes deputent ou au moins doiuent commettre la garde et la deffense des saintz laboureurs et de leur chose rustique. ¶ De leurs gaings et labours sont comblees et esplendies les tables des Roys, des princes et daultres quel[z]conques nompas seulement hommes mayz bestes et oyseaulx soient priuees ou sauuaiges. Et en eulx est tele frugalite et sobresse que pour aisier et secourir les aultres Ilz seuffrent volontairement disettes et me-saises: Ilz portent sanz Reclam le Iou de seruitute et le grief faiz de truage, Ilz regrettent seulement que ilz ne possident mie en seurte et en paix ce pou qui leur demeure apres dame sainte eglise et leurs aultres seigneurs satisfaitz de leurs rentes, demaines et subsidies. ¶ Entre les trois griefz tresbuchetz de tele beneurte comme laboureurs ont liniquite et malice

<sup>1</sup> het] hait, Add.<sup>2</sup> propres] poures, R 2.

des ministres des deulx iuridicions, eccliasitique et seculiere cest la plus mortele plaie qui plus dedens les naure et le diluge qui plus les sangloutist. Car a hommes corumpus de tous vices en ce temps est commise ladministracion et lespee de Iustice a Iuger les simples et Innocens laboureurs. ¶ Es cours iudicatoires<sup>1</sup> sont aduocat<sup>2</sup> et procureurs bien instruitz en baratz et cauteles conseilans, a mouuoir et nourrir plaiz et controuersies soit a bon droit et <sup>2</sup> a tort, afin de tirer ou gouffre de leur couuoitise les deniers des parties plaidoians soubz faulse couleur de auoir loyaulment conseil<sup>3</sup> et deffendu les causes. Las moy, ne souffisoit Il assez selon les saintz droitz canons que les prelatz aians les premieres dignitez en sainte eglise eussent comment<sup>3</sup> il ont leurs diligens Archediacles pour aduiser et enquerir par les Cites et dioceses les crimes et excès parpetres par les hommes et iceulx rapporter, aux oreilles des prelatz des lieux, afin de iceulx punir et corriger selon iustice. Certes il souffisoit a dieu, maiz non pas au deable ne aux siens, car afin que soubz fardee Iustice toute la substance des simples laboureurs viengne a saouler la faim de la mauldite couuoitise des Euesques et aultres hommes deglise. Ilz mettent officiers en leurs cours, hommes barbares et sans pitie, sans bonnes meurs, sans uertus et sans sciences qui nuit et Iour espient par queles voiez Ilz puissent accuser et traire en Iugement simples et Innocens hommes plus dignes destre absolz que condempnes. ¶ Pource, excellent, noble et puissant prince, ce que le scay vostre singulier plaisir et toute vostre estude tourne en la partie de commune bonte et que aux malheureux cas dessus dicts vous corame puissant et sage, poues et sauez pourueoir et secourir. Et que vos salutaires commandemens attendue lauctorite de vostre noble et commandable vieillesse, peeuent souuerainement reparer les choses deformeez et confermer les bonnes, le au surcroys de tout ce liure ay mis fiablement ce prologue a fin que chacun congnoisse que vous nestes pas seulement nez pour vous, Maiz pour profiter a tous en ouurant la voye deschaper les cas de fortune muable et au[e]uglesse parce que vous abandonnez a tous le plain entendement du volume dessus dit, du quel par vostre commandement lay entrepris la charge de le translater de latin en langage francoys. ¶ Si vueillez donques excellent, noble et puissant prince, mon tres singulier bien-faiteur et redoubte seigneur, deffendre ma cause comme la vostre propre contre les enuieux, qui sans iuste cause voudront malicieusement contrestre a ceste vostre oeuvre qui par moy est ourdie et terue au moins mal selon mon pouoir. Et pour leuident n[e]cessite et pour le iuste desir que lay dauoir bon

<sup>1</sup> iudicatoires] Iudiciaries, R 2.<sup>2</sup> et] ou, Add., R 2.<sup>3</sup> comment] comme, Add., R 2.



commancement et de meilleur moyen et de tres bonne fin en ceste besoigne qui ne peuvent daultre venir fors de celui qui sans en auoir moins donne a tous ces dons de grace. ¶ Je prie, appelle et requier dieu a qui fortune obeit, qui trebuche et drece les hommes selon leurs pechiez et uertus que par sa surhabundant grace Il enrichisse mon ame de science sans errer, et ma bouche de paroles accordans a verite et me donne bonnes meurs sanz desroguer a la diuine loy: Et quil conduie ma plume diligemnent escriuant sanz langoureuse paresse au commun prouffit de touz et a la loange diuine.



# THE FALL OF PRINCES



# BOOK I.

## PROLOGUE.

[Here begynneth the book callyd I. Bochas descriuyng the falle of Pryncys pryncessys and othir nobles translatid in to Inglissh bi Iohn Ludgate Monke of the Monastery of seynt Edmundes Bury atte commaundement of the worthi prynce Humfrey duk of Gloucestre begynnyng at Adam & endyng with kyng Iohne take prisonere in Fraunce bi Prynce Edward.]<sup>1</sup>

<p><b>H</b>E that whilom dede his dilligence          The book of Bochas in Frensh to translate          Out of Latyn, he callid was Laurence;          The tyme trewli remembrid and the date,          The yere* whan kyng Iohn thoruh his mortal fate          Was prisoner brouht to this regioun,          Whan he first gan on this translacioun.</p> <p>In his prologe affermyng off resoun,          Artificeres hauyng exêrcise          May chaunge and turne bi good discrecioun          Shappis, formys, and newli hem deuyse,          Make and vnmake in many sondry wyse,          As potteres, which to that craft entende,          Breke and renewe ther vesselis to a-mende.</p> <p>Thus men off craft may off due riht,          That been inuentiff &amp; han experience,          Fantasien in ther inward siht          Deuises newe thoruh ther excellence;          Expert maistres han therto licence          Fro good to bettir for to chaunge a thyng,          And semblabli these clerkis in writyng,</p> <p>Thyng that was maad of auctours hem beform,          Thei may off newe fynde and fantasie,</p>	<p>[p. 1]</p> <p>4</p> <p>8</p> <p>12</p> <p>16</p> <p>20</p>	<p>Lydgate says that Laurence de Premierfait began his translation in the year that King John of France was brought prisoner to England.</p> <p>As craftsmen use their powers of invention,</p> <p>so may skilled clerks amend and improve their originals,</p>
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3. he] *erased in H.*  
 16. han] have H.

5. The yere] Yeer B, R, H, There J.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 1 a.

Out of old chaff trie out ful cleene corn, 24  
 Make it more fressh and lusti to the cie,  
 Ther subtil witt and ther labour applie,  
 With ther colours agreable off hewe,  
 Make olde thynges for to seeme newe. 28

if they are  
 modest and  
 free from  
 envy,

Afforn prouydid that no presumpcioun  
 In ther chaungyng haue noon auctorite,  
 And that meeknesse haue dominacioun,  
 Fals Envie that she not present be; 32  
 But that ther ground with parfit charite  
 Conueied be to ther auauntage,  
 Trewli rootid a-myd of ther corage.

as was  
 Laurence.

Thus Laurence fro hym envie excludid, 36  
 Thouth toforn hym translatid was this book,  
 Withynne hymself he fulli hath concludid,  
 Vpon that labour whan he caste his look,  
 He wolde amende it; but first he forsook 40  
 Presumpcioun, and took to hym meeknesse,  
 In his prologe as he doth expresse.

He excelled  
 as a writer  
 of French,

In which processe, lik as-I am lerid,  
 He in his tyme off cunningg dede excelle 44  
 In ther language, therfore he was requerid  
 Off estatis, which gan hym eek compelle,  
 A-mong hem holde off rethorik the welle,  
 To vndirfonge this labour they hym preie, 48  
 And\* ther request he lowli dede obeie.

but felt it  
 to be a great  
 task to write  
 the Fall of  
 Princes.

Ful weel he felte the labour was notable,  
 The fall of nobles, with eueri circumstaunce,  
 From ther lordshippes, dreedful and vnstable, 52  
 How that thei fill to putte in remembraunce,  
 Therin to shewe Fortunys variaunce,  
 That othre myhte as in a merour see  
 In worldly worshepe may be no surete. 56

No rose is  
 without a  
 thorn,  
 no man so  
 high in his  
 estate that  
 he may not  
 fall.

Bi exaample, as there is no rose  
 Spryngyng in gardeyns, but ther be sum thorn,  
 Nor fairer blosme than Nature list dispose,  
 Than may ther beute, as men ha[ue] seyn toforn, 60  
 With bittir wyndes be fro ther braunchis born,

24. ful] wol H, well R 3, wel P — out] om. H 5. 46. gan] can R.  
 49. And] And he B — he] om. R — lowly he dide J.  
 58. gardeyns] gardyn H. 61. fro] frome H.



Nor noon so hih in his estat contune  
Fre fro thawaityng & daunger of Fortune.

Wherefore Bochas for a memoriall,  
Consid[e]ryng the grete dignitees  
Off worldli pryncis in ther power roiall,  
Grete emperours, estatis and degrees,  
How Fortune hath cast hem from ther sees;  
Namly such as koude hemsilff nat knowe,  
Ful sodenly to make hem lyn ful lowe.

64 Bochas was  
the original  
compiler

This said auctour, auise and riht sad,  
Hath gadred out, with rethoriques sueete,  
In dyuers bookes which that he hath rad,  
Off philisophres and many an old poete,  
Besied hym bothe in cold and hete\*  
Out to compile and writen as he fond  
The fall of nobles in many dyuers lond.

of the Fall  
of Princes.  
72

Vpon whos book in his translacioun  
This seid Laurence rehersith in certeyn,  
And holdith this in his opynyoun,  
Such language as open is and pleyne  
Is more acceptid, as it is offte seyn,  
Than straunge termys which be nat vndirstande,  
Namly to folkis that duellyn vp-on lande.

Laurence  
held that it  
is good to  
write simply  
and clearly,  
80

And\* he seith eek, that his entencioun  
Is to a-menden, correcten and declare;  
Nat to condempne off no presumpcioun,  
But to supporte, pleynli, and to spare  
Thyng touchid shortly off the story bare,  
Vndir a stile breeff and compendious,  
Hem to prolonge whan thei be vertuous:

[p. 2] and he said  
that he would  
amplify the  
story wherever  
necessary;  
88

For a story which is nat pleynli told,  
But constreynynd vndir wqordes fewe  
For lak off trouthe, wher thei be newe or old,  
Men bi report kan nat the mater shewe;  
These ookis grete be nat douz ihewe  
First at a strok[e], but bi long processe,  
Nor longe stories a woord may not expresse.

92 for a narrative  
must not be  
too condensed.

63. fro] frome H — of dawnger & H. 68. from] fro R.  
75. and] and in B, H, & eke in R 3.  
85. And] As B, R, — eek] also J. 94. newe] yong H.  
95. report] reprot R.

He wrote

For which, pleynli, this noble translatur  
 Caste off purpos these stories for to write, 100  
 And for to doon his dilligent labour  
 As thei fill in ordre to endite,  
 That men afftir myhte hemsilff delite,  
 Auentures, so as thei fill in deede, 104  
 Off sundry pryncis to beholde & reede,

that men may  
see that all  
things are  
transitory.

And haue a maner contemplacioun,  
 That thynges all, wher Fortune may atteyne,  
 Be transitory of condicioun; 108  
 For she off kynde is hasti & sodeyne,  
 Contrarious hir cours for to restreyn,  
 Off wilfulnesse she is so variable, 111  
 Whan men most truste, than is she most chaungable.

Since Fortune  
is deceitful,  
we must set  
our hearts on  
divine and  
permanent  
things.

And for hir chaung and for hir doubilnesse,  
 This Bochas biddith\* that men sholde enclyne  
 Sette ther hertis, void off vnstabilnesse,  
 Vpon thynges which that been deuyne, 116  
 Where-as ioie perpetueli doth shyne  
 Withoute eclipsyng in that heuenli see,  
 Void off all cloudis off m̄utabilite.

Bochas wrote  
both of joy  
and sorrow  
and of  
Fortune's  
mutability.

Among, this Bochas writith off suetnesse 120  
 And off materes that lusti been and glade,  
 And sumwhile he writt off wrechidnesse,  
 And how Fortune kan floure & afftir fade —  
 Ioie vndir cloude, prosperite in the shade, 124  
 Entirchaungyng off euery maner thyng,  
 Which that men feelee, heer in this world lyvyng.

He told the  
story of all  
estates,

And in his processe, who-so list beholde,  
 Off alle estatis, off hih and louh degre, 128  
 And off pryncis bothe yong and olde,  
 Fro the begynnyng, which in this world ha be,  
 Lyuyng in ioie or in aduersite,  
 Fro the frste he descendith down 132  
 Off ther fortune be pleyn descripcioun.

beginning with  
Adam and  
ending with  
King John  
of France.

Off the most noble he ne spareth noon,  
 But settith hem in ordre ceriously,  
 Gynnyth at Adam & endith at kyng Iohn, 136

114. biddith] bitt B, but R, bydde H 5. 120. writith] writ H.  
 126. heer in this world lyvyng] in this world her lyvyng H.  
 129. yong] of yong H.

Ther auentures rehersyng by and by,  
Off this kyng Iohn concludyng fynaly,  
How that he was, for al his gret puissance,  
Off prynce Edward take prisoner in France.

140

This seid[e] Bochas, auctour off this book,  
Which off stories hadde gret intelligence,  
Summe he leffte [and] somme also he took, —  
Such as he leffte was off no necligence,  
Supposyng and demyng off credence,  
Alle the stories which that comoun be,  
Other knew hem also weel as he.

144

What he left  
out is of small  
consequence,

And lest that folk wolde haue had disdeyn,  
Thynges comoun to put in memorie,\*  
Therefore Bochas thouhte it was but veyn,  
To his name noon encres off glorie,  
To remembre no cronycle nor historie,  
But tho that wern for ther merit notable,  
Auctorised, famous and comendable.

148

for he included  
all the best  
and most  
famous  
histories,

In his labour hauyng a delit,  
That the mater gretli myhte auaile,  
Do plesance to the comon profit,  
Off noble stories to make rehersaile,  
Shewyng a merour how al the world shal faile,  
And how Fortune, for al ther hih renoun,  
Hath vpon pryncis iurediccioun.

152

156

shewing as in  
a mirror how  
Fortune is  
supreme

The which[e] thyng, in ful sobre wise,  
He considred in his inward entent,  
In his resoun gan to aduertise,  
Seyng off princis the blynd entendement,  
With worldli worshep how that thei be blent,  
As thei sholde euer ther estatys keepe,  
And as Fortune were I-leid to sleepe.

160

164

over Princes,  
who

As thei hadde off Fortune the maistry,  
Here enchauntid with ther pocious  
Bi sum craft off newe sorcery,  
Or bi power off incantaciouns,  
To make stable ther domynaciouns  
With iren cheynys for to laste longe,  
Lokkid to rokkis off adamantis stronge.

168

[p. 3]

believe, in  
their pride,  
that they are  
her masters.

172

137. rehersyng] rehersith H. 148. folk] folkes R 3.  
149. etc. memoire, gloire, histoire B.  
163. considred] considrith H.

But Fortune  
often casts  
them down.

Supposyng[e] in ther surquedie  
Ther estatis sholde be durable;  
But Fortune kan frowardli denye,  
Pleyntli preue that thei be chaungable,  
And to pryncis, for thei be nat stable,  
Fortune ful offte, for al ther gret estat,  
Vnwarli chaungith & seith to hem chekmat. 176

Some Princes  
even set God  
at nought,

For lordis summe in ther magnificence  
Off roial power sette off God riht nouht,  
Thei nat considre his long pacience,  
Nor aduertise his power in ther thouht,  
But in ther hertis, yiff it were weel souht,  
How he is meek and pacient to a-bide,  
Thei wolde off resoun ther pompe leyn a-side. 180 184

but He  
punishes  
them:

But for ther tarieng and ther negligence,  
That thei to hym wil nat resorte a-geyn,  
Yit off his mercy and benyuolence,  
Withoute vengeance, rigour or disdeyn,  
As a meek fadir, in alle his werkis pleynt,  
Assaieth his yerde off castigacioun,  
So for to brynge hem to correccioun. 188 192

some with  
sickness, others  
with adversity.

Summe he can ful fadirli chastise,  
Where he loueth, be punshyng off siknesse,  
And off his mercy in many a-nother wise  
Baduersite\* off sum worldli distresse;  
And he nat askith, for his kynd[e]nesse,  
Off hih nor low, who-so can aduerte,  
Noon othir tresor but a mannys herte. 196 200

Bochas  
believed that  
it is right to  
hold before  
the vicious  
notable  
examples of  
those who fell;

And as myn auctour list to comprehende, —  
This Iohn Bochas, bi gret auctorite, —  
It is almesse to correct\* and a-mende  
The vicious folk off euery comounte,  
And bi examplis which that notable be  
Off pryncis olde, that whilom dede fall,  
The lowere peeple from ther errour call. 204 208

Bi smale whelpis, as summe clerkis write,  
Chastised is the myhti fers leoun,  
And whan the suerd off vengauunce eek doth bite 212

184. rihtnouht B, R. 186. auertise R.  
198. ponysshying H, punysshying R 3, punishying H 5.  
200. Baduersite] Bathuersite B, Bi aduersite R.  
201. his] om. R. 206. correct] correctyn B.

Vpon pryncis for ther transgressioun,  
 The comon peep[le] in ther opynyoun,  
 For verray dreed[e] tremble don\* & quake,  
 And bi such mene ther vices thei forsake.

for if Princes  
 are chastised,  
 so much the  
 more ought  
 the commons  
 to dread a  
 like fate.

And such also as ha be defoulid  
 In ther vicis bi long contynuaunce,  
 Or in ther synnys rustid and Imowlid,  
 Bi good example may come to repentaunce:  
 Who hym repentith, the Lord will hym auauce,  
 And hym accepte, in hih and louh estat, —  
 The meek preserue, punyshe the obstynat.

Even hardened  
 sinners may be  
 brought to  
 repentance by  
 good example.

This said[e] mater, touchyng such[e] thyngis,  
 Myn-auctour Bochas heerafftir shal declare  
 Bexauple off pryncis & off myhti kyngis,  
 What was ther fyn, & nat the trouthe spare;  
 And theih my stile nakid be and bare,  
 In rethorik myn auctour for to sue,  
 Yit fro the trouthe shal I nat remue,

My style is  
 bare of  
 rhetoric,

But on the substance bi good leiser abide,  
 Afftir myn auctour lik as I may attheyne,  
 And for my part sette eloquence aside,  
 And in this book bewepen and compleyne  
 Thassaut off Fortune, froward and sodeyne,  
 How she on pryncis hath kid her variaunce  
 And off her malice the dedli mortal chaunce.

but I will  
 deal faithfully  
 with my  
 author.

But, o alas! who shal be my muse,  
 Or onto whom shal I for helpe calle?  
 Calliope my callyng will refuse,  
 And on Pernaso here worthi sustren alle;  
 Thei will ther sugre temp[er]e with no galle,  
 For ther suetnesse & lusti fressh syngyng  
 Ful ferr discordith fro materis compleynyng.

I have no  
 Muse; my  
 subject is too  
 doleful for  
 the Sisters of  
 Mt. Parnassus,

My maistir Chaucer, with his fresh comedies,  
 Is ded, alas, cheeff poete off Breteyne,  
 That whilom made ful pitous tragedies;  
 The fall of pryncis he dede also compleyne,  
 As he that was of makyng souereyne,  
 Whom al this land sholde off riht preferre,  
 Sithe off oure language he was the lodesterre.

and Chaucer,  
 alas, is dead,  
 the lodestar  
 of our  
 language.

216. don] down B, R, a down J. 217. mene] menys H.  
 229. nakid] naked H.  
 251. sholde off riht] of right ou3t J.

Other men,  
too, wrote  
tragedies:  
Seneca, Tully,  
and Francis  
Petrarch, who

Senek in Rome, thoruh his hih prudence,  
Wrot tragedies of gret moralite;  
And Tullius, cheeff welle off eloquence,  
Maad in his tyme many fressh dite;  
Franceis Petrak, off Florence the cite,  
Made a book, as I can reherce,  
Off too Fortunys, welful and peruerse.

[p. 4]

256

made a book  
of Two  
Fortunes.

And ageyn bothe wrot the remedies,  
In bookis tweyne made a divisioun,  
A-mong rehersyng many fressh stories.  
The firste book is thus conueied doun,  
A dialoge twen Gladnesse and Resoun;  
The seconde can ber me weel witesse,  
Maad atwen Resoun & Worldli Heuynesse.

260

264

John Bochas  
told how  
Princes fell  
into distress.

The mater is wondirful delectable,  
Thouh wo with ioie haue an interesse;  
And Iohn Bochas wrot maters lamentable,  
The fall of pryncis, where he doth expresse  
How fro ther ioie thei fill in gret distresse;  
And all these writers, thoruh ther famous renoun,  
Gret worshipec dede vnto ther nacioun.

268

272

All praise to  
my master  
Chaucer, who  
refined our  
language.

And semblabli as I ha[ue] told toforn,  
My maistir Chaucer dede his besynesse,  
And in his daies hath so weel hym born,  
Out off our tunge tauoiden al reudnesse,  
And to refourme it with colours of suetnesse;  
Wherfore lat us yiue hym laude & glory  
And putte his name with poetis in memory.

276

280

He wrote  
Troilus,

Off whos labour to make mencion,  
Wherthoruh off riht he sholde comendid be,  
In youthe he made a translacioun  
Off a book which callid is Trophe  
In Lumbard tunge, as men may reede & see,  
And in our vulgar, longe or that \* he deide,  
Gaff it the name off Troilus & Cresseide.

284

and  
translated  
Boece.

Which for to reede louers hem delite,  
Thei ha[ue] theryn so gret deuocioun.  
And this poete, hymselff also to quite,

288

263. thus] thus first H. 267. wondirful] riht wondir H.  
268. an interesse] intresse R.  
284. callid is] is callid R. 286. that] than B, R.



Off Boeces book, The Consolacioun,  
Maad in his tyme an hool translacioun.  
And to his sone, that callid was Lowis,  
He made a tretis, ful noble & off gret pris,

292 He made a  
treatise on  
the Astrolabe  
for his son  
Lewis,

Vpon thastlabre in ful notable fourme,  
Sette hem in ordre with ther dyuysiouns,  
Mennys wittis tapplien and confourme,  
To vndirstonde be ful expert resouns  
Be domefieng off sundry mansiouns,  
The roote out-souht at the ascendent,  
Toforn or he gaff any iugement.

296

He wrot also ful many day agone,  
Dante in Inglissh, hymself so doth expresse,  
The pitous story off Ceix and Alcione,  
And the deth eek of Blaunche the Duchesse,  
And notabli dede his bisynesse,  
Bi gret auys his wittis to dispose,  
To translate the Romaunce off the Rose.

300

304 translated  
from Dante  
and wrote  
Ceix and  
Alcyone,  
The Deth of  
Blaunche,  
The Romaunt  
of the Rose,

Thus in vertu he sette al his entent,  
Idilnesse and vicis for to fle;  
Off Foulis also he wrot the Parlement,  
Theryn remembryng of roial Eglis thre,  
How in ther chois thei felte aduersite,  
Tofor Nature profred the bataile,  
Ech for his parti, yiff it wolde auaile.

308

The Parlement  
of Foules,

He dede also his dilligence & peyne  
In our vulgar to translate and endite  
Origen vpon the Maudeleyne,  
And off the Leoun a book he dede write;  
Off Anneleyda\* and of fals Arcite  
He made a compleynt, doolful & pitous,  
And off the broche which that Vulcanus

316

Origen on  
Mary  
Magdalen,  
The Book of  
the Lion,  
Anelida and  
Fals Arcyte,  
the story of  
the brooch  
that Vulcan  
wrought,

At Thebes wrouhte, ful dyuers of nature,  
Ouide writith, who theroff hadde a siht,  
For hih desir he shulde nat endure  
But he it hadde, neuer be glad nor liht;  
And yiff he hadde it onys in his myht,

320

324

292. an] & R. 294. The last two letters of pris torn off H.

303. Dante] Dant H. 305. eek] also H.

312. remembryng] memebryng R. 318. mawgdeleyne H.

320. Anneleyda] Anneloyda B, H 5, Anneleida R, H, P,

anelida J. 328. writ] wrott R.

- Lich as my maistir seith and writ in deede,  
It to conserue he sholde ay lyue in dreede. 328
- The Legende  
of Good  
Women,  
This poete wrot, at request off the queen,  
A legende off parfit hoolynesse,  
Off Goode Women to fynde out nynteen 332  
That dede excelle in bounte and fairnesse;  
But\* for his labour and [his] bisynesse  
Was inportable his wittis to encoumbre,  
In al this world to fynde so gret a noumbre. 336
- The  
Canterbury  
Tales,  
He made the book off Cantirburi Talis, [p. 5]  
Whan the pilgrymis rood on pilgrymage  
Thoruhout Kent bi hillis and bi valis, 340  
And alle the stories told in ther passage,  
Enditid hem ful weel in our language:  
Summe off knyghthod, summe off gentilesse,  
And summe off loue & summe off parfitnesse,
- including  
the stories of  
Melibeus in  
prose,  
Griselda,  
and The  
Monk's Tale,  
And summe also off gret moralite, 344  
Summe off disport, includynge gret sentence.  
In prose he wrot the Tale off Melibe,  
And off his wiff, that callid was Prudence,  
And off Grisildis\* parfit pacience, 348  
And how the Monk off stories newe & olde  
Pitous tragedies be the weie tolde.
- and many  
complaints,  
roundels,  
ballades  
and songs.  
This said poete, my maistir in his daies,  
Maad and compiled ful many a fressh dite, 352  
Compleyntis, baladis, roundelis, virelaies  
Ful delectable to heryn and to see,  
For which men sholde, off riht and equite,  
Sithe he off Inglissh in makynge was the beste, 356  
Preie onto God to yiue his soule good reste.
- Poets used  
to be the  
favourites  
of kings.  
And these poetis I make off mencionn,  
Were bi old tyme had in gret deynte,  
With kyngis, pryncis in euery regioun, 360  
Gretli preferrid afftir ther degre;  
For lordis hadde plesance for to see,  
To studie a-mong, and to caste ther lookis  
At good[e] leiser vpon wise bookis. 364

334. But] And B. 342. 2nd summe] & summe R.  
345. encludyng R. 348. Gresildes B.  
352. a] om. H. 357. good] om. R.

For in the tyme off Cesar Iulius,  
 Whan the tryumphe he wan in Rome toun,  
 He entre wolde the scoole off Tullius  
 And heere his lecture off gret affecciou; 368  
 And natwithstandyng his conquest & renoun,  
 Vnto bookis he gaff gret attendaunce  
 And hadde in stories ioie and gret pleasunce.

Cesar  
 himself  
 listened to  
 Tully's  
 teaching.

Eek in this land, I dar afferme a thyng: 372  
 There is a prynce ful myhti off puisaunce,  
 A kyngis sone and vncler to the kyng  
 Henry the Sexte, which is now in Fraunce,  
 And is lieftenant, and hath the gouernaunce 376  
 Off our Breteyne, thoruh whos discrecioun  
 He hath conserued in this regioun,

In this  
 country  
 there is a  
 Prince, a  
 good knight,

Duryng his tyme, off ful hih prudence,  
 Pes and quiete and sustened riht, 380  
 Yit natwithstandyng his noble prouidence,  
 He is in deede proued a good[e] knyht,  
 Eied as Argus with resoun and forsiht;  
 Off hih lettrure, I dar eek off hym telle, 384  
 And treuli deeme that he doth excelle

who excels  
 all in  
 understanding

In vndirstondyng alle othir off his age,  
 And hath gret ioie with clerkis to comene:  
 And no man is mor expert off language, 388  
 Stable in study alwey he doth contune,  
 Settyng a-side alle chaungis of Fortune;  
 And wher he loueth, yiff I shal nat tarie,  
 Withoute cause ful loth he is to varie. 392

and loves to  
 be with  
 scholars and  
 read their  
 books.

Duc off Gloucestre men this prynce calle,  
 And natwithstandyng his staat & dignite,  
 His corage neuer doth appalle  
 To studie in bookis off antiquite, 396  
 Therin he hath so gret felicitye  
 Vertuously hymself to ocupie,  
 Off vicious slouth to haue the maistrie.

He is the  
 Duke of  
 Gloucester,

And with his prudence and with his manheed, 400  
 Trouthe to susteene he fauour set a-side,  
 And hooli chirch[e] meyntenyng in deed,

a man who  
 upholds the  
 church and  
 tolerates no  
 Lollard,

369. renoun] gret Renoun H. 374. to] vn to H.  
 375. Henry] Herry H, Henri J. 376. lefftenaunt H.  
 382. goode] riht good H.  
 384. lettrure] lecture B, R, lettur R 3, lecture P.  
 400. 2nd with] wit R.

That in this land no Lollard dar abide —  
 As verray support, vpholdere and eek guide 404  
 Sparith noon, but maketh hym siluē strong  
 To punysse all tho that do the chirch[e] wrong.

manly and  
 wise, he is a  
 foe to all  
 heretics.

Thus is he bothe manli and eek wis,  
 Chose off God to been his owyn knyht, 408  
 And off o thyng he hath a synguler pris,  
 That heretik dar noon come\* in his siht,  
 In Cristis feith he stant so hool vpriht,  
 Off hooli chirche diffence and champioun, 412  
 To chastise alle that do therto tresoun.

And to do plesaunce to our lord Iesu,  
 He studieth euere to haue intelligence;  
 Reedyng off bookis bryngith in vertu, 416  
 Vices excludyng, slouthe and negligence,  
 Makith a prynce to haue experience,  
 To knowe hym silff, in many sundri wise,  
 Wher he trespassith his errour to chastise. 420

He knew the  
 book of  
 Bochas,

And a-mong bookis, pleyntli this the cas, [p. 6]  
 This said[e] prynce considred off resoun,  
 The noble book off this Iohn Bochas  
 Was, accordyng in his opynyoun, 424  
 Off gret noblesse and reputacioun,  
 And onto pryncis gretli necessarie  
 To yiue exauple how this world doth varie.

and bade me  
 translate it  
 into English,

And for this cause, as in his entent, 428  
 To shewe thuntrust off al worldli thyng,  
 He gaff to me in comaundement,  
 As hym sempte it was riht weel sitting,  
 That I shulde, afftir my cunnyng, 432  
 This book translate, hym to do plesaunce,  
 To shewe the chaung off worldli variaunce.

which I will  
 do, although  
 I lack  
 eloquence.

And with support off his magnificence,  
 Vndir the wyngis off his correccioun, 436  
 Thouh that I haue lak off eloquence,  
 I shal procede in this translacioun,  
 Fro me auoidyng al presumpcioun,  
 Lowli submyttyng eueri hour & space 440  
 Mi reud language to my lordis grace.

409. o] oon H. 410. come] comen B, R.  
 415. studieth] studieht R. 421. this] this is R, J.  
 428. this cause] pise causes J, these causes P.

And as I haue o thyng weel in mynde,  
 He bad me I sholde in especiall,  
 Folwyng myn auctour, writen as I fynde,  
 And for no fauour be nat parciall —  
 Thus I meene to speke in generall,  
 And noon estat syngulerly depraue,  
 But the sentence off myn auctour saue.

I will follow  
 my author  
 and shew  
 no bias,  
 444

Al this conceyuyd, I gan my stile dresse,  
 Thouhte I wolde in my mater proceede;  
 And for the mater abraid on heuynesse,  
 Off fressh colours I took no maner heede,  
 But my processe pleynli for to leede,  
 As me sempte it was to me most meete  
 To sette apart all rethoriques sueete.

and, as my  
 matter is  
 serious, I  
 shall omit all  
 flourishes.  
 452

Dites of murnyng and off compleynynge  
 Nat appertene onto Calliope,  
 Nor to the Muses, that on Parnaso synge,  
 Which be remembrid in noumbre thries thre;  
 And onto materes off aduersite,  
 With ther sugred aureat licour  
 Thei be nat willi for to doon fauour;

456 Calliope and  
 her Sisters  
 cannot help  
 me write of  
 aduersity,

But off disdeyn me setting ferr a-bak  
 To hyndre me\* off that I wolde endite,  
 Hauyng no colours but onli whit & blak,  
 To the tragedies which that I shal write.  
 And for I can my-silff no bet acquite,  
 Vndir support off all that shal it reede,  
 Vpon Bochas riht thus I will proceede.

460

so I will do  
 my best in  
 simple black  
 and white.  
 464

468

### Explicit prologus.

### Incipit Liber Primus.

[How adam and Eue for their inobedience were  
 putout of paradys• lyued in sorowe and  
 woo/thei and their of spryng.]<sup>1</sup>

W<sup>h</sup>an Iohn Bochas considred hadde & souht [p.8]  
 The woful fall off myhti conquerours,  
 A remembraunce entrid in his thouht,  
 Reknyng the noumbre off our predecessours,  
 And first to mynde cam the progenitours

Adam and  
 Eve first  
 appear before  
 Bochas,

472

463. ferr] fast H. 464. me] men B, R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 3 b.

trembling with  
weakness and  
old age.

Off al mankynde, ferre Ironne in age,  
And toward hym holdyng the passage, 476  
As hym thouhte in his inward siht,  
In ther comyng ful pitousli tremblyng,  
Quakyng for age and for lak off myht,  
Ther gret feeblesse be signes out shewyng; 480  
And oon off hem, first at his comyng —  
Our fadir Adam — sodenli abraide,  
And to myn auctour euene thus he saide:

[How Adam & Eue stondyng/naked before Bochas  
desired him to put theire woful fall first in  
remembraunce.]<sup>1</sup>

Adam said,  
"It is right  
that you  
should begin  
with us.

"Cosyn Bochas, I will weel that thou lere, 484  
Thou that art besi to serche ouer all  
Off infortune the maner to enquere,  
Hir sodeyn chaung, turnyng as a ball,  
Off erthli pryncis from ther estat roiall — 488  
It is most sittyng, or we assundir twynne,  
At vs tweyne thi processe to be-gynne.

"The Serpent  
caused our  
exile from  
Paradis."

Considre first, the Lord in his auis,  
Whan he us made onto his liknesse, 492  
He putte vs bothe into Paradis,  
There talyued in parfit stabilnesse —  
Til the Serpent dede his besynesse  
Off fals envie to make us lese our grace, 496  
Perpetueli texile us fro that place."

Fairest of  
all creatures  
were they;

And whan Iohn Bochas nakid hem beheeld,  
Withoute the hand fourmyd off Nature, —  
Off slym off therthe in Damascene the feeld 500  
God made hem fairest a-boue ech creature;  
And for thei sholde perpetueli endure,  
Bi discrecioun for a prerogatiff  
He endued hem with a soule off liff. 504

God gave  
them the  
Garden of  
Eden,

Parfit off age as man off thretti yeer,  
Putte hem afftir in possessioun  
Off Paradis, a place most enter,

485] That art so besi to serche oueral J — serche] serch out  
H, P, R 3.

486. maner] mateer H — Inquere H. 504. He] om. H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 3 c. in margin.



And off delices a chose mansioun,  
Where Adam made an imposicioun  
To fissh and foul, and to thes beestis all,  
Off verray resoun what men sholde hem call.

508

Out off a rib, whil that Adam sleep,  
Eue was drawe, ful fair off hir visage,  
Al sodenly or that\* he took keep,  
Afftir to hym ioynynd in mariage  
For his disport and his auantage,  
So as the Lord first wyues dede ordeyne  
Outher for helpe or for encrese off peyne.

512

and for  
Adam's  
advantage  
Eve was  
created, and  
became  
his wife.

516

God onto hem gaff the souereynte  
Off Paradis and dominacioun,  
A place fulfellig off al felicitye,  
The frutis all in ther subieccioun,  
Sauff that off oon was maad excepcioun,  
Which God forbad, the Bible can deuise,  
That thei sholde touche it in no wise.

520

All fruits in  
that beautiful  
garden  
were theirs  
save one,

524

All delices off that heuenli place  
God gaff to hem and put in her keypyng,  
To vsen hem eueri hour and space  
To ther most ese, as was to hem likyng —  
Bloomys, blomys, ther fairnesse ay hauyng,  
And the frutis alway off o fresshnesse,  
For wyntir stormys myht do hem no duresse.

528

and all the  
delights of  
that heavenly  
place were  
given into  
their keeping.

532

The soil enbroudid ful off somer floures,  
Wher weedis wikke hadde noon interesse;  
For God and Kynde with fresshnesse off colouris  
And with ther tapitis & motles off gladnesse  
Had maad that place habounde in al suetnesse;  
And fressh[e] Flora, which is off floures queene,  
Hir lyuere made off a perpetuel greene.

536

The soil was  
embroidered  
with flowers,

The trees rauhten almost to the heuene,  
Which cast a-boute a ful plesant shade,  
That storm nor reyn, thundir, wynd nor leuene  
No power hadde ther leuys for to fade:

540

and the trees  
grew up  
almost to  
the sky.

508. delices] delites H, delitis J, delittes R 3, delites H 5, P.

509. an] om. R. 514. that] than B, H.

516. and] and for H.

521. fulfillid H, fulfid J.

526. delices] delites H, H 5, delittes R 3, delices J, delices P.

538. which] whilk H. 541. abouten R, H.

For euer thei wern Ilich[e] fressh and glade; 544  
 And whan thei list, ther thei myhte see  
 Mid off that gardyn off liff the holsum tre,

But they  
 foolishly ate  
 the fruit of  
 the Tree of  
 Life.

Which vertu hadde ageyn al maladie 548  
 Folk to preserue off youthe in ther fresshnesse,  
 Who eet theroff sholde neuer deie,  
 But lyuen euere in ioie and in gladnesse,  
 And nouthur feele trouble nor siknesse,  
 But in that place haue alwey hertis ese 552  
 And suffisaunce off al that myht hym plese,

against God's  
 command-  
 ment,

Euer endure and neuer falle in age, [p. 9]  
 For which it was callid the tre off liff.  
 But whan Adam was fallyn in dotage 556  
 And ageyn[es] God gan holdyn striff,  
 Thoruh excityng off hir that was his wiff,  
 And wilfulli gaff to hir assent  
 To breke the precept & comandement 560

Off God the Lord, thoruh wilful necligence,  
 Taproche the tre, which that bar the name,  
 The tre off cunnyng and also off science:  
 For off the frut who that dede attame, 564  
 He sothli sholde, the Bible seith the same,  
 Off good & euell haue cunnyng in his thouht,  
 Where-as tofforn off euyl he knew riht nouht.

and brought  
 evil into the  
 world.

Thus hadde thei first off euyl experience, 568  
 Where-as toforn thei knew no wikkidnesse;  
 Presumpcioun and inobedience  
 Brouht hem fro ioie into wrechidnesse:  
 For afor-tyme, myn auctour berth wittnesse, 572  
 Helthe and goodnesse wer callid verray liff,  
 Euyl namyd siknesse, first roote of al our striff.

There were  
 three rivers  
 in Paradise,

In Paradis, myn auctour seith certeyn,  
 Thre ryuers wern, so orient and fyne, 576  
 Lich quyksiluyr vpboilyng on the pleyn,  
 And in ther rennyng verray cristallyne,  
 Which from a welle heuenli and deuyne

550. 2nd in] *om.* H. 553. hym] hem R.  
 557. ageynes God gan holdyn] ageyn God began to holden J,  
 ayenst God gan to holden P.  
 558. excityng] encityng R. 559. gaff] he yaue P.  
 562. bar] bere R. 574. Euyl] Ill R 3 — namyd] namy R.

In ther vpspryngyng and ther aualyng down 580  
Off al plesance gaff so soote a soun,\*

That it wolde rauysshe a corage, — wholesome  
Whos bawmy licour endued al the place, air, all manner  
And with the fressshnesse & cours off his passage 584 of herbs and  
The holsum hair hertis dede embrace, — spices, and  
Ther was such plente off plesance & off grace, the sound  
That eueri spice, herbe, greyn and roote of birds  
Wer founde growyng in that gardeyn soote. 588 singing.

Ther was also a delectable soun  
Off song off birdis in ther armonye,  
The hair was cleene from al corrupcioun,  
For ther engendrid was no maladie; 592  
Ther was al merthe, ther was al melodie,  
Off ioie and blisse souereyn suffisance,  
With al that may to hertis do plesance.

And off clerkis lik as it is told 596  
In ther bookis, as thei determyne, The sun shone  
How in his speer the sonne manyfold brighter then  
Was off mor vertu & mor cleer dede shyne than it does  
Than it doth now in his mydday lyne, 600 now,  
The moone whittere with\*hir\* bemys cleer,  
And euery sterre brihtere dede appeer.

Euery thyng was therē more vertuous and there was  
Than thei be now, who can beholde and see; 604 perpetual  
For in that place ther was nothyng noious, peace and joy.  
But parfit gladnesse knet onto surete,  
Perpetuel pes, ioie and prosperite,  
And in that blisse to makyn hem mor strong, 608  
To ther confort God spak with hem a-mong.

Off his goodnesse he bar hem cumpanye,  
Shewed onto hem his gracious presence,  
Angelis also ther staat to magnifie 612  
A-mong to serue hem dede ther dilligence  
In dyuers offices with humble reuerence,  
And Nature wrouhte for the nonys  
Off roial purpill and off riche stonys 616

Tissues off gold and othir ornamentis  
For tenvirowne ther bodili beute,

581. so soote a soun] a soote soun B, R. 585. embrace H.

601. hir] his B, R, R 3. 603. vertous R.

617. ornamentis] precious stonys R (in another band).

- Shapyng to hem such maner garnementis  
 As angelis vsen in ther felicite — 620  
 Nakid thei wer[e]n fairest on to see;  
 For whil thei stood in staat off innocence,  
 Thei hadde off clothyng noon experience.
- They could  
 have lived  
 there always  
 in celestial  
 joy,  
 And off ther blisse to make mencion, 624  
 And off ther ioies that were celestiall,  
 Ther may be maad[e] no comparisoun  
 Off no ioie which is temporall,  
 Which sholde ha been lastyng & inmortall, 628  
 Euer talyued in merthe and in gladnesse,  
 Sauff ageyn resoun, off verray wilfulnesse
- had not Adam  
 given credence  
 to a Snake.  
 Thei banshid hemsilff out of that blisful liff,  
 Whan Adam gaff credence to a snake 632  
 And wrechidli gan trustyn on his wiff,  
 Which gan thappill off the Serpent take,  
 And plesantli dede a present make  
 Onto Adam, as she that ferst began 636  
 Deth to deuysel and poisoun onto man.
- Their fall  
 was the more  
 bitter,  
 But as ther ioie was incomparable, [p. 10]  
 Grettest ther lordship aboue al ertheli thyng,  
 So ther fall was to he[m] importable; 640  
 For he that was all other surmountyng,  
 In Paradis regnyng as a kyng,—  
 Was it nat a dedli mortal peyne  
 Fro thilke place to haue\* a fall sodeyne! 644
- for it followed  
 felicity.  
 For thilke sorwe surmountith euery sorwe,  
 Which next folwith afftir felicite;  
 No wo mor greuous at eue nor at morwe,  
 As is in deede sodeyn aduersite 648  
 Which cometh onwarli afftir prosperite,  
 Nor nothyng more may hertis disauaunce  
 Than off old ioie newe remembraunce.
- Take example  
 of Adam  
 and Eve,  
 Takith exaumpil off Adam and off Eue, 652  
 Makith off hem a merour in your mynde,  
 Wher of resoun it dede hem gretli greue  
 For to be put, allas, so ferre behynde

619. maner] *om.* R.621. weren] *wern* H 5, P, were J, R 3.628. immortall R. 629. 2nd in] *om.* H, J, H 5.631. banshid] *banyssht* H, *banysshid* J. 633. on] to R.644. thilke] *that* H 5 — to haue] *taue* B.

Out off that blisse, thei and al ther kynde,  
 Chaungyng thestat off immortalite  
 And becam subiect to deth and pouerte.

656 who became  
 subject to  
 poverty and  
 death.

Ther sodeyn chaung & ther onwar myscheeff  
 And ther onhappi transmutacioun, —  
 It was to hem ful vnkouth and vnleeff  
 For to departe fro thilke mansioun  
 That was so full off delectacioun,  
 Fro such delicis sodenli to goo  
 Into this world which is so full off woo.

660 It was hard  
 for them to  
 leave the  
 Garden of  
 Eden and its  
 delights.

There is delit, and heer is sorwe [&] care,  
 There is ioie, and heer is heynesse,  
 There is plente, and heer is euel fare,  
 There is helthe, and heer is gret siknesse,  
 Heer trouble ay meynt with onseur gladnesse,  
 Ther is ay blisse and eternal glorie,\*  
 And heere no merthe but fals & transitorie.

664

668

672

Allas, how thei wer blyndid in ther siht  
 Thoruh veynglorie\* and fals ambicioun!  
 Thei wente wrong, thei lokid nat a-riht,  
 Fals couetise was ther confusioun,  
 Wherthoruh thei loste the dominacioun  
 Off Paradis, and wex bothe poore & thrall,  
 Ther fredam lefte and becam mortall.

They were  
 blinded by  
 vainglory

676

Onto God thei wolde ha be semblable,  
 Lik onto hym good and euel to\* knowe,  
 And in ther trust for thei wer nat stable,  
 From ther estat thei were brouht ful lowe:  
 And thus, alas, the seed was first isowe,  
 The roote plantid off disobeissaunce,  
 Which brouht our lynage to sorwe & myschaunce.

680 and brought  
 low.

684

Thus cam in first thoruh inobedience,  
 As bi a gate, pouerte and neede;  
 And at ther bak folwed indigence,  
 Sorwe, siknesse, maladie and dreede,  
 Exil, banshyng and seruitute, in deede,  
 Which causid man longe to contune  
 Vndir the lordshipe & daunger off Fortune.

688 Thus, through  
 disobedience,  
 all evils came  
 into the world,  
 sorrow,  
 sickness,  
 fear, pestilence,  
 death,

692

657. immortalite R. 664. delites H, R 3.  
 668. euelfare B. 669. gret] om. H. 670. Heer] Heere is R.  
 671. 2. gloire, transitoire B, transitoire H. 674. veyngloire B.  
 681. to] ta B. 683. brouht] I brouht H.

- Thus cam in eek maladie and deth  
 To dispoile mankynde off his beute,  
 Long siknesse and pestilence that sleth 696  
 Bi sodeyn strok which no man may fle; \*  
 For onto Adam and his posterite  
 Deth was annexid bi successioun  
 For his offence, and so conueied down 700
- and the infirmities of old age.  
 Fro man to man in eueri maner age.  
 For who list knowe, synne brouht in shame,  
 Man to be feeble and feynt in his passage,  
 And be processe to wexen halt and lame — 704  
 Onto Adam this was an vnkouth game,  
 To be constreynyd from riche apparaile  
 In bareyn erthe to sekyn his vitaile.
- Adam had to toil for his living  
 In hungir [and] thrust heere he ladde his liff, 708  
 With soot, with labour and tribulaciouns,  
 Endured also many mortal striff,  
 Off hot and cold riht straunge passiouns,  
 Off elementis sodeyn mutaciouns, 712  
 Wynd, hail and reyn feerfulli fallyng,  
 And onwar strokis off thundir & lihtnyng.
- in the dread of cruel beasts, dragons and scorpions.  
 Thei stood also in daunger and in dreed  
 Off cruel beestis, tigres and leouns, 716  
 Off tusshi booris, who-so taketh heed,  
 And in gret feer off these fell dragouns,  
 Thassaut off serpentis and off scoriouns;  
 For thilke beestis that toform were mylde, 720  
 Afftir ther synnyng ful rage wex and wilde.
- He and Eve shed bitter tears.  
 Wher thei stood[e] first in sekirnesse, [p. 11]  
 Off ioie and blisse euer in oon lastyng,  
 Out off ther reste thei fill in onseurnesse, 724  
 In sorwe and sihhyng, & dolorous pleynyng;  
 And fro ther eyen contynueli wepyng,  
 The bittir teris day be day distille,  
 In this desert for wantyng off ther wille. 728
- Afterwards Cain slew Abel,  
 And whethir wer thei sorweful or\* fayn,  
 Long tyme afftir ther desolacioun,  
 Whan thei fond Abel ther owyn sone slayn

697. which] which that H 5 — fle] see B, R.

699. annexid] anvexed R. 708. and] om. H.

709. soot] seot R, swete H, swett R 3, swet P — 2nd with] and J, H 5. 713. feerfulli] feerdfulli J.

725. dolorous] dolours R. 729. or] outhur B.



Be cruel Caym to his confusioun,  
 The same Caym, as maad is mencioun,  
 Afftir that tyme wilde and vacabounde  
 Til blynde Lamech gaff hym his dethis wounde.

732

Adam nor Eue affor that ilke tyme  
 Hadde neuer seyn no feste funerall,  
 Off chaung it was\* to hem a newe pryme,  
 For to beholde a thyng disnaturall,  
 Brethre off o wombe be hatred fraternall,  
 The toon off herte\* so feer hymself deuyde,  
 Off fals malis to been an homicide.

736

which gave  
 occasion for  
 the first  
 funeral.

740

And was it nat a peyne whan thei stood,  
 For to beholde ther sone pale and ded  
 Ligge on the ground[e], bathid in his blood,  
 And al the soil where he lay was red,  
 That whan Adam and Eue tooken heed,  
 It was to hem ful gret aduersite  
 The newe slauhtre to beholde and see.

744

748

And euer a-mong ther sihhes harde and sore,  
 Ther bittir wepyng and sorwes to auauunce,  
 Or thei wer war, ther heris wexyn hore,  
 And age gan ther beute disauauunce;  
 Ther youthe also be ful gret displesaunce  
 Gan tappalle, or thei it coude espie,  
 Be cruel constreynt and force of maladie.

Their beauty  
 faded,

752

756

And whan off youthe fallyn was the flour  
 Bi the processe of many hundrid yeris,  
 And bi the duresse off many gret labour  
 Thei wex onlusti and ougli off ther cheris —  
 Off age and deth, these be the daungeris,  
 To seyn chekmat, in nature it is kouth,  
 Onto beute and greene lusty youth.

they became  
 dull and  
 uncomely  
 with years.

760

For whan the yeris fulli pæssid be  
 Off flouryng age, lastyng a sesoun,  
 Be processe, at eie men may see,  
 Beute declynyth, his blomys falle doun;  
 And lite and litil be successioun

764

768

732. Caym R, H, J, R 3, Cayme H 5, Cayn P.

735. Lameth, *as written in* B, R, H.

738. Off chaung it was] It was off chaung B — it was to hem]  
 to hem it was R 3.

741. herte] hate B, R.

752. thei] the R. 759. labour] labours R.

Cometh croked elde onwarli in crepyng,  
With his potent ful poorli manasyng.

Thus Adam,  
once the  
fairest of  
men, grew  
old and died.

Thus to our fadir, that callid was Adam,  
Off creatures fairest off alle faire, 772  
Afftir gret age, bi processe deth in cam,  
And gan onwarli ascende vpon the staire  
With his potent, and caste hym to repaire  
With Antropos, which affor shal goon 776  
For tuntwyne his lyuys threed anoon.

He was  
buried in  
Hebron.

And in Ebron was maad his sepulture,  
Ther afftir bilt a myhti gret cite,  
Bi whos story and record off nature 780

His dis-  
obedience  
made all  
men subject  
to death.

I may conclude, who-so list to see,  
That neuer man hadde liberte,  
Sithen that Adam our Lord gan disobeye,  
Ageyn[e]s deth, but that he muste deye. 784

### The compleynt off Bochas vpon the fall off Adam.

Bochas  
laments the  
fate of Adam,

**I**N compleynyng, myn<sup>n</sup> auctour Iohn Bochas  
Ful pitousli in his aduertence  
Bewepith, wailith, & offte seith allas,  
In an appel ther was so gret offence, 788  
That for a tast off inobediencē,  
Adam, allas, sholde ha[ue] so gret a fall,  
So sodenli to deie and be mortall!

whose  
example  
teaches us  
the sorrow  
of the world.

Which exaumpil ouhte I-nouh suffise, 792  
In al this world[e] thouh there were no mo,  
Texemplefie to folkis that be wise,  
How this world is a thoruhfare ful off woo,  
Lich fals Fortune, which turnyth to and fro 796  
To make folkis, whan thei most cleerli shyne,  
In ther estatis onwarli to declayne.

For all their  
pride, men  
must die.

For thouh that thei her hedis leffte a-loffte [p. 12]  
Hih as Phebus shynyth in his speer, 800  
Thynke them-silff[e], as it fallith offte,  
Ther renoun rechith aboue the sterris cleer,  
And how ther fame surmountith euery speer —

775. and] *om.* H.

797. cleerli] clery R. 799. lifft H. 800. Hih] lich R.

801. Thynke] tenke R.

- Ther trust corrupt hath a ful sodeyn fall, 804  
 For to declare how thei be mortall.  
 O worldli folk, aduertisith off entent,  
 What vengauce and what punycioun  
 God shal taken in his iugement 808  
 For your trespas and your transgressioun,  
 Which breke his preceptis a-geyn al resoun!  
 Ye han forgotten, how with his precious blood  
 You for to saue he starff vpon the rood. 812  
 For yiff Adam for his disobeissaunce  
 Was bi the Lord, as hym list ordeyne,  
 Maad first & formyd with euery circumstaunce  
 Off creatures to be most souereyne, 816  
 Yiff that he was enbraced in the cheyne  
 Off seruitute, with thraldam ouerseyn,  
 What shal I thanne off othir folkis seyn,  
 That lyuyn heer in this desert off sorwe, 820  
 In this exil off plesance desolat,  
 And in this world[e], both at eue &\* morwe,  
 Off hertili ioie stonde disconsolat,  
 Al destitut and eek infortuniat, 824  
 And forpossid with wo off worldli trouble,  
 Ay variable and ful off chaungis double?  
 Ye nat entende but to fals couetise,  
 To fraude, baret and extorsioun, 828  
 Geyn God and trouthe in many dyuers wise,  
 Geyn your neihbour be fals collusioun  
 To doon [him] wrong and oppressioun,  
 And werst off all, ye rechch[e] nat be synne 832  
 To sle your soule, worldli good to wyne.  
 And yiff it falle your power be but small  
 Taccomplisse your auarice in deede,  
 Your synful will assentith ouerall 836  
 Thyng to desire off which ye\* may nat speede;  
 And thus fals lust doth your bridil leede,  
 Thrust off hauyng so sore you doth assaile,  
 Falsli afferd the world you sholde faile. 840

O worldly  
people, know  
that God will  
punish you

as he did  
Adam, most  
sovereign  
of men!

You draw  
only to  
covetousness  
and fraud,  
you oppress  
your fellow  
men and  
slay your  
own souls  
for gain. If  
too weak to  
sin in deed,  
you sin in  
thought.

822. &] & at B, R, H, J, R 3.

826. ful] om. R.

831. him] om. R, H. 832. ye] the R. 834. falle] hap R3.

837. ye] thei B, om. R. 839. Thurst R, H.

840. Falsli] Fals R.

If God  
chastises you  
lightly, you  
complain.

And yiff that God, benigne and debonaire,  
With his yerde off castigacioun  
Chastise you but esili and faire,  
Ye grucch ageyn[es] his correccioun,  
Nothyng aduertyng in your discrecioun,  
How God nat bad us, who can taken heed,  
Nat for to stryue nor to wrastle in deed,

844

God does not  
bid us prove  
our might  
on the  
Chimera,

Nouthur our strengthe nor our myht tapplie  
Vpon the beeste monstuous and sauage,  
Which callid is the Chymere off Licie —  
Speciali whan he is in his rage,  
Which monstre hadde to his auantage  
Hed off a leoun, as bookis determyne,  
Wombe off goot, and tail serpentyne,

848

852

or conquer  
the Golden  
Fleece, or  
slay the  
Minotaur or  
do anything  
that is  
impossible.

Which was outraied off Bellofforon,  
As olde poetis make mencioniun.  
Nor God bad nat that men sholde gon  
Into Colchos to conquere with Iason-  
The Flees off Gold, which in that regioun  
With firi bolis off metal maad and bras,  
And bi a dragoun ful streihtli kepid was.

856

860

God bad us nat our cuntrees for to lete  
To vndirfonge thynges impossible,  
The Minotaur for to slen in Crete,  
Halff man, halff bole, yiff it be credible,  
Which was a monstre hatful and odible,  
Whilom brouht foorth, in bookis ye may see,  
Bi Minos wiff, callid Pasiphe,

864

868

Whos story techith, yiff ye list to lere,  
This ougli beeste cruel and monstuous,  
Thoruh Adriane, the kyngis douhter deere,  
Was whilom slay[e]n be duc Theseus  
Withynne a caue maad be Dedalus.  
God bit us nat, pleynli, for his sake,  
So gret emprises for to vndirtake.

872

He does not  
tell us to risk  
our lives in  
adventure as  
did Hercules.

He bit us nat to been so rek[e]les  
In pereilous deedis that been marciall  
Vs to iuparte as dede Hercules,

876

847. to wrastle] for to wrastile R, for to wrastle H, for to  
wrastill R 3.

850. callid] clepid H. 855. Bellofforon] belliferoun J.

862. bad] gaff R. 869. lere] heer H. 872. be] the R.

Which bi the biddyng in especiall  
Off Euristeus, the myhti kyng roiall,  
Lord off Athenys, to make his honour shyne,  
Lernyd off armys the famous disciplyne.

880

Off his preceptis yiff we han a siht  
And remembre off his hih bounte,  
He vs comaundith thyngis that been liht  
For taccomplisshe with al humilite,  
From our corage tauoide al vanite,  
And from our hertis texcludyn idilnesse  
And the fals chaung off al worldli gladnesse.

[p. 13] He asks us  
only to exclude  
vanity and  
idleness from  
our hearts.

884

888

For on-taman that parfit is and stable,  
Bi good resoun myn auctour doth well preue,  
There is no thyng mor fair nor agreable  
Than fynali his vicious liff to leue,  
On verray God rihtfully beleue,  
Hym loue and worshepe a-boue al ertheli thinges;  
This passith victory off emperours and kynges.

892

Nothing  
pleases a good  
man more  
than to do  
right and  
love God.

896

The Lord bit eek, who\* that can discerne,  
Off enter loue to doon our labour  
In this liff heer so oursilff \* gouerne,  
To fadir & moodir that we do dieu honour,  
And in ther neede to doon to hem socour,  
And in al vertu our freadis to conforte,  
And to our power in myscheeff hem supporte.

900

For in this world is no thyng mor parfit,  
Nor taccomplisshe thyng off mor plesance,  
Than a man for to haue delit  
In litil good to hauen suffisance,  
And be content in his gouernance,  
Voide auarice and thynkyn euer a-mong,  
To his neihbour that he do no wrong.

904

A man should  
be content  
with litte  
wealth, do no  
wrong to his  
neighbour,

908

Nat to coueite his goodis in no wise,  
Hymself gouerne lik to his estat,  
Nat excede, but fleen and eek despise

912

880. Euristius R.

890. on-taman] vnto a man H, J, R 3, P, H 5.

895. ertheli] om. R.

897. bit] biddith R 3, H 5 — who] we B, R.

899. oursilff] our liff B, R. 902. conforte H.

907. hauen] haue H, R, R 3.

913. excede] to excede J, H 5 — an l precedes eke in H (slip of pen).

and live in  
continence  
and peace.

Al maner loue which is disordynat,  
Hymself preseruyng from kontek & debat,  
And speciali teshewen, it is good,  
Slauhtre, moordre & shedyng eek off blood.

916

He should  
avoid scorn  
and follow the  
example of  
Our Lord,

Fleen from his synne and hatyn for to lie,  
Off olde offencis a-mong ha[ue] repentance,  
And teshewe al scorn and moquerie,  
Ageyn vicis doon almesse and penance,  
And to haue most souere[y]nli plesance  
To sue the pathes\* of our Lord Iesu,  
Trewe examplaire off grace and al vertu.

920

924

who asked  
nothing more  
than that we  
do as he  
bade us.

Which for our sake and our redempcioun  
And for our loue was nailid to a tre,  
Suffrid peyne and cruel passioun,  
And nothyng axeth, off hih nor low degre  
Recompensid ageynward for to be,  
But that we sette al hooli our ententis  
For to fulfille his comaundementis.

928

And off his grace heer in this mortal liff,  
As we precelle in wisdom and resoun,  
And off his giffte han a prerogatif

932

Let us be  
better than  
beasts, and  
remember  
that all  
worldly  
wealth shall  
fade as a  
rose,

To for all beestis bi discrecioun,  
Therefore lat us off hool entencioun,  
As we off resoun beestis ferr excede,  
Lat us forn\* hem be, be woord, example and deede.

936

Grounde us first vpon humilite,  
Our pompous eien meekli to vnclose,  
Enclyne our hedis, and to conceyue and see  
Al worldli welthe shal fadyn as a rose,  
And off meek herte lat us oursilff dispose,  
Bi this tragedie to ha[ue] knowlechyng  
Off our myscheff how roote and eek gynnyng

940

944

and that  
pride and  
disobedience  
were the  
beginning  
of sorrow.

Was the vice off inobediēce,  
Surquedie and fals disobeissaunce,  
As myn auctour hath shewid in sentence,  
Enprentith it weel in your remembraunce,  
Be-war\* the serpent with his disseyuauce,

948

920. mokrye H. 923. pathes] paththes B, R, pathis H.

932. his] om. R. 933. in] of J — and] of J.

934. han] and R. 936. hool] hoolde R.

938. forn] afor MSS. — 1st be] om. J — 2nd be] in H 5 —  
by example word & dede R 3.

944. to haue] ta H. 950. Be-war] Beth war B, J.



The flesh, the world, your enmies, alle thre,  
Thoruh ther treynys ye nat deceyued be.

952

Your beste sheeld to make resistance  
Ageyn ther power sothli is meeknesse,  
Your haberioun most myhti off diffence,  
The feendis myht to venquysshe and oppresse,  
Is to remembre deuoutli with lownesse,  
How meekli Crist to paien our ransoun  
Suffred on a crosse deth and passioun.

956

Meekness is  
your best  
shield of  
defence.

Wherbi men may, that prudent been & wis,  
The ioies cleyme which been eternall,  
And entre ageyn into Paradis,  
Fro when[ne]s whilom Adam hadde a fall;  
To which[e] place a-boue celestiall,  
O Crist Iesu, so brynge us to that glory,  
Which be thi deth hadde the victory!

960

May Jesus  
bring us  
again into  
Paradise!

964

### ¶ The lenvoye off this tragedie.

SODEYN departyng out off felicitye  
Into miserie and mortal-heuynesse,  
Vnwar depriuynge of our prosperite,  
Chaung off gladnesse into wrechchidnesse,  
Long langwisshyng in wo and bittirnesse,  
Contynuel sorwe, dreed, dool and pestilence  
Were first brouht in bi inobedience.

[p. 14]

968

Disobedience  
turned all  
joy into woe.

972

Adam and Eue losten ther liberte,  
Ther fraunchise and ther blissidnesse,  
Put into exil and captyuyte  
To lyue in labour, in wo and pensifnesse,  
Thoruh fals desirs off pompous wilfulnesse,  
To the Serpent whan thei gaff credence,  
The Lord mistristyng thoruh inobedience.

976

Thus Adam  
and Eve fell,

980

But, o allas, where-as thei were fre,  
Off ioie eternal stood in sekirnesse,  
Thei were to blynde — allas, it was pite! —  
To leue ther reste and lyue in werynesse,  
Al ther offspryng to bryngyn in distresse,  
Drawyng fro God his due reuerence  
Thoruh fals consentyng to inobedience.

984

and brought  
their  
offspring  
into distresse.

959. a] *om.* J, H 5.

962. entre ageyn] ageyn entre H, R, R 3. 966. the] *om.* H.

972. pestilence] offence H. 980. mystrustyng H.

Princes,  
beware of  
insolence  
and pride,

Wherefore, ye Pryncis, ausili doth see, 988  
As this tragedie in maner berth wintesse,  
Where-as wantith in any comounte  
Subieccioun, for lakkyng off meeknesse,  
And with pouert pride hath an interesse, 992  
Ther folwith afftir thoruh froward insolence  
Among the peeple fals inobedience.

remember  
that your  
subjects will  
deal with  
you as you  
deal with  
them.

And, noble Pryncis, which han the souereynte  
To gouerne the peeple in rihtwisnesse, 996  
Lik as ye cherisshe hem in pes and vnyte,  
Or frowardli destroie hem or oppresse,  
So ageynward ther corages thei will dresse  
Lowli tobeie to your magnyficence, 1000  
Or disobeie bi inobedience.

[How Nembroth bilt the toure of babilone to saue  
him from noyous flodis which for his pride was  
put fro his magnificence and his toure with  
sodeyne levene smyten down.]<sup>1</sup>

Only eight  
people were  
saved from  
the Deluge,

**M**YN auctour Bochas, as he that vndirstood  
The vengauces & myscheuis huge  
Which that God took with Noes Flood, 1004  
Whan he sente an vniuersel deluge,  
Ageyn[e]ls which there was no refuge,  
Sauf eihte personis in that mortal wo  
Withynne a ship were sauyn and no mo. 1008

therefore my  
author passes  
over to  
Nimrod.

Wherefore myn auctour lihtli ouergoth,  
Makith off that age no special remembraunce,  
But passeth ouer from Adam to Nembroth,  
Consid[e]ryng how in that dedli chaunce 1012  
The Lord for synne took so gret vengauce,  
That be writyng off cronique nor historie,\*  
Off hih nor low was lefft[e] no memorie.

During the  
Flood all  
books were  
destroyed,

For ther was lefft cronicle noon nor book 1016  
Afftir the Flood, that made mencion  
Off noon auctour, who-so list to look;

991. lakkyng] lak H. 994. 6. poeple R. 1007. eihte] viij B.  
1014. cronique nor historie] story nor victoire B, H, R 3,  
P, stories nor victorie J; story nor victoire is altered to  
cronique nor histoire in R. 1015. memoire B.

<sup>1</sup> MS J. leaf 6 recto.

For al was brouht to destruccioun  
 Bi a deluge, withoute excepcioun, 1020  
 For which myn auctour transportid hath his stile,  
 And off that tyme list nothyng compile.

He fond no mater wheron he myht founde  
 Nor sette his foot, bi noon auctorite, 1024  
 Nor no trouthe his purpos on to grounde  
 Off old[e] writyng that he coude see;  
 For which hym thouhte, off necessite  
 The surplusage off al that tyme lete, 1028  
 And afftir Adam with Nembroth for to meete.

so my author  
 found no  
 material until  
 he came to  
 Nimrod,

And certis, lich as Bochas in this book  
 Remembrith first off Adam the storye,  
 So next in ordre he the story took 1032  
 To speke off Nembroth and his surquedie,  
 Which heere in erthe, as bookis specefie,  
 Afftir the Flood his wawes gan asswage,  
 Was maad a lord to gouerne in that age. 1036

a proud king.

For whan the floodis begonne\* to discrese,  
 And God his vengauce gan to modifie,  
 Withdrouh his hand, the watir tho gan cese,  
 Vpon the mounteyns hie off Armenye 1040  
 The shipp gan reste, the Bible can nat lye;  
 And in that age, callid the secounde,  
 Lynage off man be-gan a-geyn tabounde.

After the  
 Flood

Tencrese ageyn and to multeplie, 1044  
 And bi discent, in bookis ye may see  
 Specefied the genealogie,  
 How that oon Chiris, cosyn to Noe,  
 A man that tyme off gret auctorite, 1048  
 Onto this Nembroth, the story doth assure,  
 The fadir was, as bi engendrure.

men began  
 to increase  
 again.

This Nembroth wex myhti, large and long, [p. 15]  
 Excelling othre as off his stature, 1052  
 Surquedous, hardi and riht strong,  
 And in his tyme gret labour myht endure,  
 And in his force so moche he dede assure,

Nimrod was  
 mighty and  
 bold.

1024. foot] feet R.

1026. altered into: Of Olde writyng eke coude he nothing se, R.

1035. his] is R.

1037. begonne] began B, R, H. 1055. he] om. R.

- That ther was noon on watir nor on lond 1056  
Which durste presume his power to withstond.
- called Prince  
of Hunting, And his noblesse mor to magnefie  
In worldli worshepe, bi report off his glorie,\*  
He was callid cheeff prynce off venerie, 1060  
Desirous euer for to han victorie  
Off beestis wilde, to be put in memorie  
And haue a pris amongis these champiouns,  
Tigres to daunte, bores and leouns. 1064
- feared by  
man and  
beast. Ther was no beeste in wodes so sauage  
That durste ageyn hym make resistance;  
His furious ire so mortal was and rage,  
The erthe quook for feer off his presence, 1068  
Til atte laste in his aduertence,  
As a prynce deuoidid off al grace,  
Ageyn[e]s God he gan for to compace.
- He began  
to conspire  
against God, He made a maner coniuracioun, 1072  
This froward geant, and a conspiracie,  
Took his counseil bi fals collusioun,  
His myht, his power for to magnefye,\*  
And his estat for to glorefie, 1076  
Thouhte he wolde off his entent nat faile  
God and the heuene proudli to assaile.
- and thought  
he would  
secure him-  
self against  
another  
Deluge That maugre God, which [that] gouernyth all,  
He thouhte he wolde proudli take on honde, 1080  
Ageyn deluges, yiff any falle shall,  
Off prouidence pleykli hem withstonde,  
Hymself tassure & make a place on londe  
That sholde hym keepe & been to hym diffence 1084  
Bothe a-geyn God and watris violence.
- And that thei myhte acomplisse ther entent  
Lich ther desir, thei dedyh ther labour,  
Took ther counseil al be oon assent, 1088  
Chose Nembroth ther duc, ther gouvernour  
Hem to conveie and doon to hem socour,  
To been ther guide, afforn as thei were war,  
Toward a contre which callid is Sennar, 1092

1058. his] *om.* R.

1059, 61, 62. gloire, victoire, memoire B, R, J.

1075. magnefye] multeplie B, J, H 5, R.

1079. which pat H; R, R 3, H 5, P agree with B.

In compas wise round a-boute closid  
 With a gret flood namyd Eufates.  
 Ther straunge foli which thei han purposid,  
 For to fulfille thei wer nat rek[el]les:  
 This to seyne, thei put hemsilff in pres,  
 So hih a tour for to edefie,  
 Which that sholde surmounthe a-boue the skie,

by building  
 a high tower.

1096

That thei sholde greued be no more,  
 With no deluge brouht to destruccioun,  
 Nor that watres may nat greue hem sore,  
 This was the fyn off ther entencioun.  
 And off that tour & myhti strong dongoun,  
 Geyn God and floodis hemsiluen to assure,  
 The heihte and largesse were off o mesure.

1100

1104

Thus off Nembroth encresen gan the name;  
 And in the peeplis reputacioun,  
 Off gold and riches he hadde so gret a fame,  
 Thei callid hym god in ther opynyoun,  
 Most eurous, most myhti off renoun,  
 The world al hool vndir his obeissaunce,  
 As god and lord he took the gouernaunce.

Nimrod's reputa-  
 tion grew; he was con-  
 sidered a  
 god, and  
 governed the  
 whole world.

1108

1112

Vndir whos myht the peeples gan proceede,  
 He as a lord hauyng inspeccioun,  
 Pershyng the bowell[s] off the erthe in deede  
 To make myhti ther fundacioun;  
 And off fals glory and veyn ambicioun,  
 This proude Nembroth in his appetit,  
 To seen hem werke hadde ful gret delit.

1116

1120

His ioie was and his inward gladnesse  
 To beholde so gret a cumpanye  
 Percen the erthe bi so gret depnesse,  
 To make the ground[e] strong bi masounrye,  
 The werk vpward for to fortefie,  
 With many a ston, huge & large off weihte,  
 Thei han it reisid vp in the heir off heihte.

He rejoiced  
 in the build-  
 ing of his  
 tower,

1124

And fynali bi mediacioun  
 Off this gret werk Nembroth wex famous,  
 Takyng in herte gret consolacioun,

1128 and in his  
 riches and  
 fame.

1099. that] *om.* H.

1116. bowell R 3, H, bouel R, bowels J, bowelles H 5, bowels P.

1123. Persyng H.

That be report he was so glorious,  
 Off so gret myht & off port so pompous, 1132  
 That he was so myhti, riche and strong  
 To reise a tour, so wid, so large, so long.

The tower  
 was called  
 Babel, but  
 now it is  
 the lair of  
 serpents and  
 the air about  
 it is in-  
 fected.

For to this day touchyng the grete myht [p. 16]  
 Off this tour, which Babel yit men call, 1136  
 Men fro ful ferr may han therof a syht,  
 For it surmountith othir touris all.

Off which[e] werk thus it is befall,  
 Off serpentis and many a gret dragoun 1140  
 It is now callid cheeff habitacioun,

That no man dar, as ferr as thei it see,  
 For wikkid heir and for corrupcioun,  
 Bi a gret space and bi a gret contre 1144  
 Approche no neer that merueilous dongoun,  
 So venymous is that mansioun  
 And so horrible, no man dar approche,  
 Lik to a mounteyn bilt off a craggi roche. 1148

Yet it rises  
 to the stars

And as men seyn that haue had ther repair,  
 This tour atteynyth onto the sterris cleer,  
 And transcendith the regioun off the hair.  
 The ston, the syment wer maad off such mateer, 1152  
 And the ioynyng so stedfast and enteer,  
 Thouh fir and watir bothe it dede assaile,  
 Ful lite or nouht ther power sholde auaile.

so mightily  
 that no liv-  
 ing creature  
 ever saw  
 another like  
 it.

It was maad so myhti to endure, 1156  
 So weel assurid be disposicioun,  
 That in this world no lyuyng creature  
 Sauh neuer noon lik in comparisoun;  
 Whos reryng up was cheeff occasioun, 1160  
 And the richesse off the masounrye,  
 Wherthoruh Nembroth off pride and surquedie

Nimrod grew  
 proud and  
 thought him-  
 self the equal  
 of God,

Dempte proudli, as in his auys,  
 He transcendid all othre in noblesse, 1164  
 Thouhte hymself most myhti & most wis,  
 Felawe to God, as be liklynesse.  
 But God, that can al worldli pride oppresse,  
 And make pryncis eclipsen in ther glory, 1168  
 Such as truste in thyngis transitory —

who thereupon  
 knocked down a  
 great part of his  
 tower and killed  
 his workmen.

The same Lord off his eternal myht,  
 This tour which Nembroth list to edefie,  
 He made with thondir & with leuene liht 1172



Theroff to falle a ful gret partie;  
 The boistous wyndis and the rage skie,  
 And Goddis power on the tother side,  
 Gan thus a-bate a parcel off his pride. 1176

And in discence and fallyng off the stonys,  
 Off the werkmen ful many a man was ded,  
 And oppressid, ther bak Ibroke and bonys,  
 The masounry with ther blood was red: 1180  
 Yit proude Nembroth, that of this werk was hed,  
 With al these signes his Lord ne list nat knowe,  
 For which his pompe was afftir brouht ful lowe.

But Nimrod,  
 angry and  
 undaunted,

But in his errour procedith forth off newe,  
 Thouhte he wolde gete hymselff a name,  
 Off malencolie gan chaunge look and hewe,  
 And gan also attempten and attame,  
 For to encrece and magnefie his fame, 1188  
 A newe tour to edefie a-geyn,  
 Lik as God hadde be blynd & nothyng seyn.

started to  
 build a new  
 tower.

He wolde haue rauht up to the steris seuene  
 Bassent off hem that gan hym first counsaile,  
 Robbid God, & from hym rauht the heuene;  
 But who presumeth the Lord aboue tassaile,  
 It were no resoun that he sholde auaille:  
 Pryncis may weel ageyn hym crie loude, 1196  
 But his power may clipse with no cloude.

He would  
 have snatched  
 the heavens  
 from God,

For in the middis off his grete emprises,  
 This proude Nembroth makynge his masouns  
 For to compasse and castyn there deuises,  
 Gemetriens in ther dyuysions, — 1200  
 But God that hath his inspecciouns,  
 Seyng thentent off eueri ertheli man,  
 As he that is most myhti and best can 1204

but God  
 knows the  
 minds of all  
 men,

Ageyn ther malis make resistance,  
 Ther worldli power, ther domynacioun  
 Off his onchaungable & most magnificence

1174. rage] Ragous H, ragious R 3, P.

1188. fame] name H.

1197. clipse] clippe R.

1199. masouns] mansiouns H.

1201. Gemetriens] Geometryens R, Geometries H 5, Geme-  
 tries J, Gemetriens R 3, Gemetriens H, P.

and can  
punish the  
pride of  
princes.

He can chastise and ouerwhelme down — 1208  
The pride off pryncis in eueri regioun,  
Bexaumples off Nembroth, a-noon as ye shal heer,  
Whos pompe rauhte a-boue the sterris cleer.

God made a  
confusion of  
tongues

For whan his werkmen stood at auantage, 1212  
And most were besi to his entencioun,  
And to-fortyme spak al o language,  
Al sodenli be transmutacioun  
Ther was off tungen maad a dyuysioun, 1216  
That in ther werkynge as thei gan abraide,  
No man wiste what that othir saide.

and divided  
the hearts of  
the work-  
men.

And it is likli accordyng with resoun, [p. 17]  
So as the chaunge was maad off ther languages, 1220  
So off ther hertis was maad dyuysioun,  
Bothe off ther will, and off ther corages;  
And in descendyng off ther werkynge stages,  
Ther was such chaunge off brother onto brother, 1224  
Lik straungers noon knew thentent off other.

Myn auctour trowith that this dyuersite  
Was for ther gilt causid be vengauce,  
And ellis God off riht and equite 1228  
Disposid hath in his ordenauce  
To been a-mong hem so gret a variaunce,  
That thoruh the world thei sholde hemself deuyde,  
And from Nembroth disseuere & nat a-bide. 1232

They quar-  
relled with  
one another  
and forsook  
the land of  
Shinar.

Thei gan a-noon a-mong hemsilff disdeyne  
To accepte this Nembroth for ther kyng;  
Yit a-mong hem, in soth ther wer nat tweyne 1236  
Oon off a-nother that hadde cleer knowyng,  
Nor off ther speche that knew the pleyng menyng:  
For which the contre off Sennar thei forsook,  
And ech off hem a sondri contre took.

Nimrod's  
efforts were  
in vain.

Thei departid, made no lengere spacis, 1240  
Folwyng the fortune off ther dyuysioun,  
And gan to chese hem newe duellyng placis  
In the parties off many a regioun;  
And thus Nembroth was pryued & put down, 1244  
And off Babel, the myhti famous tour,  
He was no lengere callid possessour:

1220. maad] *om.* H.

1244. thus] this H.

For a-geyn the pride off this Nembroth  
 Froward Fortune gan hir cours to varie,  
 And God also was in maner wroth,  
 Off surquedie that he was so contrarie;  
 And for the place was wilde and solitarie  
 Off this Sennar, furious and sauage,  
 Nembroth gan feeble & falle into gret age.

He grew old  
 and feeble,

1248

And yit summe bookis off hym specefie,  
 He wix froward off his condicioun,  
 And was first ground off ydolatrie  
 And fyndere up off fals relegioun,  
 Causyng peeplis to haue openyoun  
 Goddis to worshepe in paganysme wise,  
 Foundour off rihtis and off fals sacrefise.

and some  
 books say  
 he was the  
 founder of  
 idolatry.

1256

1260

Toward Perce he ches his duellyng-place,  
 Which contre is in the orient;  
 That his lordship sholde stretch a gret[e] space,  
 He bounded hym into the occident:  
 For Perce-lond haueth his extent  
 Toward the parties of the Rede Se;  
 And this land Perce, who-so list [to] see,

He went to  
 live in Persia

1264

As bookis olde remembre and put in mynde —  
 How that Perce costeith enviroun  
 Septemtrion and the grettere Inde  
 And many a-nothir myhti regioun,  
 Wher Nembroth first hadde domynacioun,  
 Which extendith, as bookis specefie,  
 Out off Mede into Germanye.

1268 and ruled  
 from Media  
 to Germany.

1272

But in lordshipes, as myn auctour seith,  
 Withoute that vertu be ther trewe guide,  
 In hem ther is suraunce noon nor feith —  
 Thyng that passith, which may no while abide;  
 Wherefore Bochas, in despit off pride  
 And in rebukyng off all folkis proude,  
 Makyng his compleynt crieth to hem ful loude:

There is no  
 security in a  
 lordship  
 without  
 goodness.

1276

1280

1255. wix B, R, wexe J, wexe H 5, P, wex R 3.

1265. haueth] hath H. J.

1267. this] his this R.

1280. in] om. H.

1281. Makyng] Maketh R.

¶ The mater ageyn þe pride of princis.

[An exclamacioun of Bochas ageyn al proude men/  
shewyng how god may them and their pride  
whan him best list by many dyuers menes and  
wayes punysshē & chastise.]<sup>1</sup>

You who  
are proud,  
who trust to  
reign long,

**Y**E all proude, most royall in *your* flouris,  
Which that most truste for to regne longe,  
Dressith up *your* rochis & *your* touris, 1284  
And ageyn God make *your*-siluen stronge,  
And lat *your* power proudli vndirfonge  
Your-silff with pride for to magnefie,  
Ageyns the heuene to holden chaumpartie. 1288

build your  
huge castles,  
let your men-  
at-arms keep  
watch,

Beeldith *your* castellis, reiseth hem vp on heihte  
Off adamantis [with iren] stronge Ibounde,  
With squar[e] stonys, large & huge off weihte,  
Reise up *your* wallis, most myhti and profounde, 1292  
And shet *your* dongouns with myhti cheynys rounde,  
Let men off armys, who-euer wake or sleepe,  
Nyht & day *your* wacch so streihtli keepe,

as if God  
were unable  
to take  
vengeance  
on you!

As God nor man, in *your* qpynyouns, [p. 18] 1296  
Your forteressis ne myhte nat assaile,  
Your castellis nor *your* stronge dongouns  
Stuffid with men and plente off vitaille,  
Lik to stonde euere and neuere for to faile, 1300  
As God nat myhte a-geyn *your* fals puissaunce  
Whan-euer hym list off riht to do vengeance!

Set before  
your blind  
eyes the  
pride of  
Nimrod.

Settith afforn *your* eyen that be blynde  
The monstrous werk off grete Babiloun; 1304  
The pride off Nembroth ther was put behynde,  
Maugre his myht, and his tour smet down:  
For al the crafft off werkman or masoun  
Destroied was with a sodeyn leuene, 1308  
Tauenge his pride sent a-down fro heuene.

Though your  
power be  
great, God  
will con-  
found you.

For thowh *your* strengthes so assurid be,  
That noon engyn may therto atteyne,  
Gunne nor bumbard bi no subtilite, 1312

1290. with iren] *om.* B, R, H, R 3, P; with Irons stronge  
bounde H 5.

1293. myhti cheynys] cheynes myhti R.

1289, 98. Castell H.

1312. Bombard H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 7 verso.

Shot off arblast nor touch off dundeyne;  
Yit God that is lord and souereyne,  
Which lich desertis can bothe spille and saue,  
Mai al confounde with an erthe-quaue.

1316

Myn auctour axith, what castel or what tour  
May be so strong[e] maad in any wise,  
But that be mene off sum fals tretour,  
Or be sum weie that he can deuise,  
It may be lost or sold for couetise  
And delyuered, for al ther stronge bondis,  
Into the power off enmyes hondis.

1320

The strongest  
of castles  
may be lost  
by treason

Or bi sum other sodeyn auenture,  
Castellis, citees and many a riche toun  
Han been lost; thei myhte hem nat assure  
For to resiste a-geyn[e]s fals tresoun:  
Summe ha be lost eek bi rebellioun;  
And alle these menys, the trouthe to be-gynne,  
Ys but punshyng which God sent for synne.

1324

or rebellion.

1328

God hath a thousand handis to chastise,  
A thousand dartis off punycioun,  
A thousand bowes maad in vnkouth wise,  
A thousand arblastis bent in his dongoun,  
Ordeyned echon for castigacioun;  
But where he fynt meeknesse & repentaunce,  
Mercy is maistresse off his ordynaunce.

1332

God can  
punish if he  
will, and  
shew mercy  
where he  
finds re-  
pentance.

1336

Ye that be wise, considreth how the roote  
Off vicis alle is pride, ye may weel see;  
Pullith hym down and put hym vndir foote  
And tak your counseil off humilite:  
And yff ye list [to] stonde in surete,  
Beeldith in herte for mor sekirnesse  
A tour off vertues groundid on meeknesse,

1340

Pride is the  
root of all  
vices; build  
in your  
hearts a  
tower of  
virtues.

1344

Whos masonrie is off no costage,  
Off vertues ground and souereyne,  
Blast off wyndis and off wedris rage,  
Nor no tempest hasti nor sodeyne,  
Pompe nor bost, thouth thei doon her peyne,

1348

It will stand  
forever.

1313. arowblast J, arrowblast H 5 — dundeyne] dundeyne R,  
Dondeyn H, dondeyne J, doudeyn R 3, dundayn H 5,  
dondine P. 1325. Castell H.

1335. echon ordeyned H. 1342. to] om. H, R.

This vertu meeknesse for to vndirmyne, —  
Thei be to feeble to make hire for tenclyne.

Meekness  
conquers all  
worldly  
trouble.

For wher meeknesse is groundid verrailly, 1352

Thouh he sumwhile feelee aduersite,  
He passith ouer and suffreth paciently  
And venguisshith al maner enmite,  
Thassaut also and the contrariouste 1356  
Off infortune, and off worldli trouble,  
And off victory conquereth a palme double.

And thouh meeknesse a-myd the flodis flowe  
Off worldli myscheeff and persecucioun, 1360  
Whil Pacience in hir boot doth rowe,  
Thouh froward wawes posse hir up & doun,  
A calm shal folwe off consolacioun,  
Whan sterne wyndis ther blastis ha[ue] leid lowe, 1364  
The name off meeknesse shal shewe & be knowe.

She may be  
sorely tried,  
but she will  
win in the  
end.

She may be troublid, but ouercome neuere;  
But for a tyme she may suffer werre,  
But atte eende she venquisshith euere, 1368  
On londe and se, wher she be nyh or ferre:  
To the hauene off lyff she was our lodesterre,  
I take record on the humylite  
Off Mary, so blissid mut she be. 1372

The roote off meeknesse flourith up so faire,  
Whos beute dredith no tribulaciouns;  
In somer, wyntir his flouris nat appaire,  
And hir frut last in al maner sesouns: 1376  
Pride may assaile with his bostful souns,  
But fynaly for hir encres off glorie,  
With humblesse she wyynnith the victorie.

[Lenvoy.]

You who  
have read  
this tragedie,  
take heed to  
Meekness,

**O** FOLKIS all that this tragedie reede, [p. 19] 1380  
Haueth to meeknesse a-mong your aduertence,  
Off proude Nembroth also takith heede,  
How that he fill from his magnificence,  
Onli for he be sturdi violence 1384  
List off malis the myhti Lord assaile,  
But in such caas what myht his pride auaile?

1351. for tenclyne] to inclyne H, *the entire line is written in*  
*a later hand.* 1370. our] be J, the H 5.  
1371. on] off R. 1381. Haueth] hath H.



Noble Pryncis, which that this world posseede,\*

Ye that be famous off wisdam and prudence,

And han so many subiectis, that you dreede,

In gouernaunce vndir your excellence,

Lat your power with meeknesse so dispence,

That fals[e] pride oppresse nat the poraile,

Which to your noblesse so moche may auaille.

Pride of Nembroth dede the bridil leede,

Which hym conueied to gret insolence;

Pride apperteneth nothyng to manheede,

Sauf in armys to shewen his presence —

Wherfore honour, laude and reuerence

Be to meeknesse, that hath the gouernaile

Off alle vertues man may most auaille.

1388

and, Princes,  
let not your  
pride oppress  
the poor.

1392

1396

Remember  
the pride of  
Nimrod.

1400

[How many yeres was betwixt Adam and Nembroth  
and betwixt Nembroth and Cadmus and of other  
kynges.]<sup>1</sup>

THESE olde poetis with ther sawes swete

Ful couertli in ther vers do feyne,

How olde Saturne was whilom kyng of Crete,

And off custum dede his besy peyne,

Off his godhed list for to ordeyne

That he sholde, as off his nature,

Echon deuoure as by his engendrure.

In this mateer shortli to soiourne,

To vndirstonde off poetis the processe,

Thei meene pleyntli that this woord Saturne

Doth in it-silff nothyng but tyme expresse;

And philisophres bere also witnesse,

That as in tyme, foorth euery thyng is brouht,

So tyme ageynward bryngith euery thing to nouht.

Clerkis recorde eek in ther writyng,

Vndir support as I dar reherse,

How that fir wastith euery thyng,

And iren hard doth nesshe thynges perse;

Yiff auht a-bitt that they may nat transuerse,

Yit comyth tyme, and bi contynuaunce,

And al consumeth with his sharp[e] launce.

1408

His name  
means time,  
which brings  
all things to  
nought,

1412

1416

and is more  
powerful  
than iron  
or fire.

1420

1387. posseede] doþ posseede B, R, do possede J, H 5 — that]

om. J, H 5. 1403. was] om. H. 1407. engendrure] engendre R.

1411. it-silff] þe silff H. 1416. I is misplaced after reherse R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 8 recto.

His sharp[e] toth of consumpcioun  
 In stille wise doth his besi cure  
 For to anentise, in conclusioun, 1424  
 Alle thyng that is brouht foorth bi Nature,  
 Bi long abidyng thei may hem nat assure;  
 For olde thyngis deuourid men may see,  
 Fer out off mynde, as thei neuer had be. 1428

The passing  
 of years  
 causes the  
 greatness of  
 men to fade.

Who can or may remembre in any wise  
 The glorious prowesse off these pryncis olde,  
 Or the noblesse of philosophres wise,  
 Or off poetis the feynyng to onfolde: 1432  
 Processe off yeris, alas! as I you tolde,  
 Deuoured hath ther fame and ther noblesse,  
 Derkid ther renoun bi foryetilnesse.

Their names  
 are forgotten.

Thus off ther namys is lefft no memory, 1436  
 Tyme\* with his rasour hath doon so gret vengeance,  
 Shauen a-wey the honour and the glory  
 Off many a noble, ful myhti off puissance,  
 That there is lefft now no remembrance 1440  
 Off pryncis, poetis, nor off philosophres;  
 For whan that deth nailéd hem in ther cofres,

Time wastes  
 and destroys  
 all things.

Kam tyme vpon, and bi processe off yeeris  
 Ther memory hath duskid and ther mynde, 1444  
 And reuolucioun off the heuenli speeris,  
 Bi offte turnyng ther glory hath lefft behynde:  
 Thus euery thyng which subiect is to Kynde,  
 Is\* in this liff withoute mor auauntage 1448  
 Wastid with tyme and processe off long age.

In the  
 earliest age  
 Fortuna was  
 steadfast.

In the firste age from Adam to Noe,  
 Prudent listres, which list in bookis reede,  
 Fynde off Fortune no mutabilite, 1452  
 Nor off hir chaungis took[e] tho noon hede;  
 But from Adam ther reknyd been in deede  
 Onto Nembroth, bi turnyng off the heuene,  
 A thousand yeer, seuene hundrid and elleuene. 1456

From the  
 time of  
 Adam to  
 Nimrod noth-  
 ing notable  
 happened.

In which[e] space, who that considreth weel,  
 Ther be no thyngis write in special,\*  
 Digne off memorie nor spoke off neueradeel,

1424. aventisshe J, anentissh H 5. 1432. feynyng] feyng R.  
 1437. Tyme] Tymes B, R. 1443. and] om. R.  
 1445. And] And the R — the] om. R.  
 1448. Is] As B, R. 1450. to] vn to H. 1457. considre H.  
 1458. write] writen R — special] especial B.

- Which that be notable nor historial; 1460  
 But fro the tyme Nembroth hadde a fal,  
 Onto Cadmus the yeeris to contene,  
 Thei were a thousand, foure hundrid & fourtene.
- Touchyng [this] Cadmus, as Bochas list  
 tendite, [p. 20] 1464 Vixoses was  
the first king  
of Egypt,
- It is rehercid bi rethoriciens,  
 How oon Vixoses, in bookis as thei write,  
 Was maad first kyng off the Egipcien\*,  
 Where philisophres & nygromancien 1468  
 Gan first tabounde ther renoun to auance,  
 Nachor that tyme hauyng the gouernaunce
- Off the Hebreus, as maad is mencion —  
 Aftir Nembroth, bi trewe rehersaile, 1472 and Nahor  
then ruled  
the Jews.
- Thre hundred yer bi computacioun,  
 Four score & tuelue, which tyme, it is no faile,  
 That Vixorses gan to werre & eek bataile 1476 Vixoses won  
all Egypt by  
might of  
arms, but  
his name  
has been  
forgotten.
- Off volunte geyn straunge naciouns,  
 And to conquere citees, burwes [&] touns.
- Bi force onli, withoute title off riht,  
 He wan al Egipt to encrece his name;  
 But for al that, who list to haue a siht, 1480  
 There is now lefft no report off his fame,  
 Sauf Bochas writ, how he first dede attame  
 His myhti conquest off entencioun  
 That the glory and the hih renoun 1484
- Ascryued were onto his worthynesse,  
 And the residue and the surplusage  
 Off gold, off tresor, off good & off richesse  
 Turne sholde to comoun auauntage 1488 He parted  
the plunder  
among his  
subjects.
- Off al his peeppe, that euery maner age  
 Reporte myhte, it was to hym mor nerre  
 Boue syngulerte his comou<sup>n</sup> to preferre.
- ¶ Eek Thanaus off Cithie first kyng, 1492 Thanaus  
conquered  
Scythia.  
 Whan Saruch was duk & souereyne  
 Ouer\* the Iewes, be record off writyng, —

1463. foure] iiii B. 1464. this] om. R, H.

1467. The gipcien B. 1470. Nakor H. 1474. twelue] xij B.

1475. Vixorses B, R, Vixoses J, H, H 5, P, vixioses R 3 —  
werre] werrey H.1479. to encrece] tencres of H, to encrease of P, to thencrece  
R 3. 1481. fame] name R. 1491. syngulert R.1492. Thanaus] tanaus R, Thonans J, Thomys H, Thomas  
H 5, P, thanas R. 3. 1494. Ouer] Euer B, R.

- Too hundred yeer, sexti and eek tweyne  
 Afftir Nembroth, this Tanaus gan ordeyne 1496  
 A myhti power and a strong bataile  
 Hem off Cithie proudli to assaile,
- His name too  
 is forgotten. Conqueryng fro then onto the ile  
 Callid Ponto, in ful cruel wise: 1500  
 And thouh his lordship last nat but a while,  
 Al that he wan, it was for couetise;  
 And as Bochas doth off these folk deuise,  
 Processe off yeris, for al ther gret puissance, 1504  
 Hath put ther namys out off remembraunce.
- Of Zoroaster  
 we know  
 nothing, ex-  
 cept that he  
 laughed the  
 hour he was  
 born. ¶ Zorastres eek, for al his grete myht,  
 Off Bactrians kyng and possessour,  
 Lord off Trace and a ful manli knyht, 1508  
 Off all his dedis and off his gret labour,  
 Off his conquest nor off his gret honour  
 Is nothyng lefft, off wrytyng us befor,  
 Sauf that he louh the hour whan he was born. 1512
- Ninus was  
 another  
 conqueror. He began ful soone to be merie,  
 With sodeyn lauhtir at his natyuyte;  
 And worthy Nynus, that was kyng off Assirie,  
 Expowned his lauhtre to gret felicite, 1516  
 The which[e] Nynus wan many a straunge cuntre,  
 And day be day his power gan encrese,  
 For which he wolde off his conquest nat cese.
- Such men  
 are never  
 satisfied until  
 finally  
 Fortune  
 casts them  
 down. For this the maner off these conqueroures: 1520  
 Whan thei haue had in armis o victorie,  
 Thei do ther myht, ther payne & ther laboures  
 With newe emprises to be put in memorie;  
 For ther corages, supprised with veynglorie, 1524  
 Can nat be stille content in ther estat  
 Til her parodie sey to hem chek-maat.
- Fortune off armys, in boókis ye may reede,  
 With a fals lauhtre on folkis thouh she smyle, 1528  
 She froward euere, or thei can takyn heede,  
 Off hir nature will falsly hem be-gyle;  
 Conquest bi werre lastith but a whyle,

1496. Tanaus] thauance P, Thomvs H, Thomas H 5.  
 1499. onto] In to H. 1500. Ponto] Ponte J.  
 1506. Zorastres] Zorastes R 3, Zoroastres P, Zorastees R.  
 1511. tofor] H. 1513. ful] wol R.  
 1520. maner] mateer R.  
 1528. a] om. R — folkis] bookis H.

For who bi deth doth sturdi violense,  
God will bi deth his vengauce recompense.

1532

¶ This worthy Nynus gan myhtili preuaile  
A-geyn Zorastres, off whom I spak tofore;  
For he with hym fauht last in bataile,  
In which Nynus hath hym so weel Ibore,  
That Zorastres hath the feeld Illore.  
And he was auctour, as bookis specefie,  
Off fals magik and off nygromancie.

1536

Ninus de-  
feated  
Zoroaster,  
who wrote  
books of  
magic,

1540

He fond the nature off euery element,  
Ther kyndeli werkynge & ther mutaciouns,  
The cours off sterris & off the firmament,  
Ther influencis, ther disposiciouns,  
Ther aspectis and ther coniunccions,  
Wrot in peleris deuised off metall  
The seuene sciencis callid liberall.

1544

Eek in pilers off brik ful harde Ibake, [p. 21]  
Which were up set, longe, large & huge,  
He gan eek write hem & to vndirtake  
To make hem seur, as for ther refuge,  
That thei sholde be flood nor [no] deluge  
Diffacid been, as off ther scripture,  
But in ther grauyng perpetueli endure.

1548

and caused  
the seven  
sciences to  
be inscribed  
on strong  
pillars, that  
they might  
endure  
forever.

1552

But thowh Zorastres this crafft first out fond,  
Ful lite or nouht to hym it myhte auaile;  
And thowh he were a good knyht off his hond,  
He was off Nynus slay[e]n in bataile,  
Loste his rewme and royal apparaile;  
And Nynus deide withynne a litil throwe,  
But in what wise the story is nat knowe.

1556

But Ninus  
slew him  
in battle,  
and soon  
after he  
also died.

1560

¶ Eek Moideis kyng off Sodomee,  
I fynde off hym no memory be writyng,  
Sauff in a story, as men may reede and see,  
He and his peple were fre in ther lyuyng;  
But he that was off Assiriens kyng,  
Thoruh fals Fortune, that can so offte varie,  
To Babiloyne made hem tributarie.

1564

The people of  
Sodom were  
free in their  
living.

1568

1535. A-geyn] geyn H — to forne H. 1537. borne H.

1548. brik] breke H.

1552. no] om. R, H 5.

1554. endure] to endure R.

1567. offten H.

Pharaoh and  
his men were  
drowned in  
the Red Sea,

¶ We han eek sey[e]n and rad also  
The vengauces and the pestilence  
Doon in Egipt to kyng Pharao,  
For that he made a maner resistance  
Ageyn[e]s God, off wilful necligence;  
Therfore his peeple vpon a day and he  
Were dreynt echon amynd the Rede Se.

1572

but Moses  
and the Jews  
passed safely.

The peeplis off God lad be Moyses,  
Withoute trouble off any maner wawe,  
Wente echon sauf in quiete & in pes;  
And Pharao, as he gan afftir drawe  
Hem to pursue, bi a ful mortal lawe,  
In his pursut froward and atteynt,  
A-mong the wawes with his host was dreynt.

1576

In Exodus  
we read  
about the  
Twelve  
Plagues,

In Exodo ben the menciuons  
Ceriousli put in remembraunce,  
The twelue plages and persecuciouns  
In Egipt doon, bi ful gret vengauce;  
And off ther tresor & ther gret substaunce  
Thei were despoilid bi Hebreus, it is told,  
Off ther vesselis off siluer & off gold.

1584

1588

and how the  
Jews robbed  
the Egyptians.

And out off Egipt ful gret tresor thei ladde,  
Such as thei thouhte myhte hem most auaille;  
And Pharao, I fynde that he hadde  
Too hundrid charis enarmyd for bataile,  
Hem to pursue and proudli to assaile,  
And fifti thousand, in whom ther was no lak,  
Off men off armys folwyng on horsbak.

1592

1596

Pharaoh pur-  
sued them,  
but lost his  
life because  
he was  
proud and  
obstinate.

Too hundred thousand off footmen hym aboute,  
And off Egipt al this cheualrie;  
And Pharao with al [t]his gret[e] route  
Gan Israel pursuen off envie,  
But for his pride and fals surquedie,  
He and his peeple wer drownyd euerichon,  
Off al his noumbre ther was lefft nat oon.

1600

His froward herte a-geyn God indurat,  
Fulfillid off malis and obstynacie,  
And [in] his purpos proud and obstynat:

1604

1569. eek] *om.* J, H 5.1576. peeplis] *peeple* H. 1579. gan] *can* R.

1583. exodi J, Exody P, H 5.

1585. twelue] *xij* B.1606. in] *om.* R.



These foule vicis, or he koude hem espie,  
 From his glory and his regalie 1608  
 He was cast doun, thouth he tofforn was crownyd,  
 A-myd the se a-mong his peeple drownyd.

[Off Oggigus, kyng of Thebes.]<sup>1</sup>

¶ A-nothir prynce callid Oggigus,  
 Kyng off Thebes, as bookis determyne,  
 And foundour was, thus Bochas tellith us,  
 Off a cite callid Eleusyne,  
 Which stant in Grece, whos power to declyne  
 Ther fill a flood in that regioun,  
 Which ouerflowed ful many a royal toun. 1616

Ogygus  
 founded  
 Eleusis in  
 Grece,

And in Achaia it dede most damage,  
 Tyme off Iacob, the patriark notable;  
 And this deluge with his wawes rage  
 Slouh lordis manye, & pryncis honorable:  
 For dame Fortune is so deceyuable,  
 That she sumwhile, whan she list disdeyne,  
 Can folk assaile with a flood sodeyne. 1624

where there  
 was a great  
 flood in the  
 time of  
 Jacob.

This flood also, where it dede assaile,  
 Wastid cornys bothe crop and roote,  
 Causid also scarsete off vetaile,  
 That many a man felte ful vnsoote;  
 The pore nat wiste wher to fynde boote,  
 For ther pryncis supprised were with dreed,  
 Thoruh lak off vitaile in that grete need. 1628

[Off a grete Flood in Tessalie.]<sup>2</sup>

¶ Anothir flood there was in Tessalie, [p. 22] 1632  
 In the tyme whan kyng Amphioun  
 Heeld the sceptre and the regalie  
 Vpon Thebes the myhti stronge toun,  
 Beside the kyngdam off Semalioun, 1636  
 This same tyme, this flood, ful dout[e]lles,  
 Whan Goddis peeple was lad be Moises.

There was  
 another flood  
 in Tessaly.

With this flood the land hadde be deuourid  
 Off Tessalie, and al that regioun,  
 But on Pernaso the peeple was socourid,

but the  
 people found  
 refuge on  
 the hills of  
 Parnassus.

1639. the] this H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 9 recto.

<sup>2</sup> MS. J. leaf 9 verso.

And on the rochis that stoden envirooun  
Fond ther refut, to ther sauacioun,  
And gret socour, til the flodis rage 1644  
Gan disencrece, withdrawen & asswage.

During  
Cecrops'  
reign in  
Athens, there  
was a plague  
of heat

¶ In olde stories ye may also see,  
Whan Cicraps hadde first possessioun  
Off Athenes the myhti strong cite, 1648  
An heete ther fill in that regeoun,  
Be influence that descendid doun  
From all the bodies aboue celestially,  
Which likli was for to deuouren all. 1652

called the  
Embracing  
of Phaeton.

And this hete engendrid off the sunne,  
In dyuers cuntrees, bothe in lengthe & breede,  
Hath his cours so myhtili begunne  
That many folkis fillyn in gret dreede — 1656  
Ryuers, wellis, who that list taken heede,  
Consumed were and dreied up echon,  
The hete callid thenbracyng off Pheton.

[Off goodly Isis, Wiff to Apys kyng of Argyue slayn  
bi his broþer Tyffeus.]<sup>1</sup>

Isis, daughter  
of Prometheus,  
married Apis,  
king of  
Argos.

¶ We haue eek rad in stories heer-tofforn, 1660  
How that Ysis to Egipt took hir fliht  
Out off Grece, the trewe douhter born  
Off Promotheus, a ful manly knyht;  
And this Ysis in euery manys siht 1664  
So fressh, so goodli, weddid bi hir lyue  
To worthi Apis, that was kyng off Argyue.

She was very  
beautiful  
and a ward  
of her uncle  
Epimetheus.

The which Ysis, excellyng off beute,  
Afftyr tyme hir fadir was Igraue, 1668  
She was lput for mor surete  
With hir vncl, that sholde keepe & saue  
This seid[e] maide, that no man sholde hir haue;  
And hir vncl, in Ouyde-ye may see, 1672  
Lik as he writ, was callid Epymethe.

Jupiter fell  
in love with  
her

And flouryng up in hir tendir age,  
This seid Ysis so plesant was & meete,  
Off semlynnesse, off look & off visage, 1676

1644. til] to H.

1646. also may H, R 3, all so 3e may H 5, also ye may P.

1651. scelestially H. 1653. off] first of H.

1657. list taken] listen tak R. 1668. tyme] om. R.

1669. put R, R 3, putte H 5. 1671. This] þe H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 9 verso.

That Iubiter, the myhti kyng off Creete,  
Was enamerid with hir for to meete;  
And she, excitid off femynyte,  
Enclynyd hir herte onto his deite.

1680

And for she was off hir entent so cleene,  
Obeieng hym in most lowli wise,  
Off Argyuois he maad hir to be queene.  
Because that she was smet in couetise,  
Ageyn Argus a werre she gan deuise,  
And for he was vnweeldi off his age,  
Hir to withstonde he fond non auauntage.

1684

and made  
her queen of  
the Argives.  
She warred  
on Argus,

But yit Fortune gan vp[on] hir frowne,  
And kyng Argus thoruh his subtilite,  
With his counseil so prudentli gan rowne,  
That she was take bi ful gret cruelte,  
And hir soudeours were eek made\* to fle;  
And bi Argus, ther geyned no ransoun,  
She fetrid was & put in strong presoun.

1688

who captured  
her and put  
her in prison,

But hir sone, the god Mercurius,  
Riht fressh, riht lusti & ful off hardynesse,  
And off his herte inli coraious,\*  
Ageyn[es] Argus gan his power dresse,  
And so entierli dede his besynesse  
That he was slay[e]n, in conclusioun,  
And Ysis afftir delyuerid fro prisoun.

1692

1696

but her son  
Mercury  
slew Argus  
and set her  
free.

Off hir sleihtis afftirward nat feynt,  
She took a ship and into Egipt wente,  
In which[e] ship ther was a cow depeynt;  
And Mercury,\* whom Iupiter eek sent,  
Is gon with hir, bothe off oon entent,  
To make a mariage afftir a-noon riht  
Twen hir and Apis, a pryncē off ful gret myht.

1700

1704

She then  
took ship to  
Egypt and  
married Apis.

1708

She was riht wis boue\* othis creatures,  
Secret off cunnyng, weel expert in science,  
She tauhte first lettres and figures  
To Gipcians be pleyn experience,  
Gaff hem cunnyng and intelligence

1712

She taught  
the Egyp-  
tians how to  
write and to  
till their  
land,

1680. deite] darte R. 1688. vpon] vp R.

1692. made] fayn B, R — eek] also J, H 5.

1705. Mercury] Cheurie R, B, Cheuery H, thouris J, thoures  
H 5, Mercury P.

1709. boue] aboute B, R, H, J, P, H 5.

To tile ther land, tauhte ther laboreris  
To sowe ther greyn & multeplie bi yeris.

and was  
worshipped  
as a goddess.

And in Egipt hir fame and hir renoun [p. 23] 1716  
Gan day be day wexe and hir worthynesse,  
Holde off cunnyng and reputacioun  
Be signes shewed, nat onli a pryncesse,  
But she was holde a-mong hem a goddesse, 1720  
And with worshepis which that were dyuyn  
And sacrefises, to hir thei dede enclyne.

Apis, her  
husband, son  
of Jupiter  
and Niobe,

But to declare pleyntli at a woord,  
A-myd[des] al hir gret prosperite, 1724  
Myhti Apis, hir husbonde and hir lord,  
Prynce off Egipt and duk off that cuntre,  
Sone off Iubiter and off Nyobe,  
Which Nyobe, bi lynage descendyng, 1728  
The douhter was off Phoroneus the kyng —

was cruelly  
slain by his  
brother  
Typhon,

¶ And Phoroneus first the lawes fond  
To which al Grece stant vndir obeissaunce,  
And the statutis off that myhti lond 1732  
Were establisshid bi his ordynaunce —  
But for to write the vnhappi chaunce  
Off kyng Apis, as it is remembrid,  
He slay[e]n was and pitousli dismembrid 1736

Bi his brother callid Tiffeus,  
Sumwhat off hatrede, but mor for couetise;  
For Tiffeus was inli desirous  
To reioishe in ful mortal wise 1740  
The myhti kyngdam, as ye han herd deuise,  
Off Argyuoyis to haue possessioun,  
Preferrid be moordre & fals successioun.

and after-  
wards be-  
came the  
god Serapis.

And whan that Ysis fond hir lord so ded, 1744  
Off entent that he were magnefied,  
First off wisdam she gan takyn heed,  
Ordeyned a mene that he were deified,  
Hih a-mong goddis to be stelled, 1748  
In Egipt templis maad hym to be stallid,  
And god Serapis afftir he was callid.

1718. and] & off R.

1720. a-mong hem] ther R.

1738. off] for H.

1743. fals] bi R.

[[O]ff Grisiton þat hes membres ete for hunger.]<sup>1</sup>

- ¶ What shal I write off the cas horrible  
 Off Erisiton, with hungir so constreynyd, 1752 Erysichthon  
 That his liff was to hymselff odible, sold his  
 In Thesalie with indigence peynyd; daughter  
 And pitousli his fame was disteynyd, for hunger.  
 Whan he solde his douhter in seruage, 1756  
 Liriope, which was but yong off age,  
 Beschaung off gold to purueie hym vitaille,  
 Off verray neede he was so wo-begon;  
 He hadde no thyng that myhte his thrust auaile, 1760 and after-  
 Nor staunche his hungir with gnawying on a bon, wards, alas,  
 Wherefore he eet his membris oon bi oon. ate his  
 A prynce, alas, was it nat pite members.  
 To seen hym deie in such aduersite! 1764
- ¶ We han eek rad, ful many a day tofor,  
 The grete baneshyng and proscricioun,  
 Off Argyuois how kyng Gelanor  
 Was crueli put from his regeoun; 1768 Danaus,  
 And his lieges, off indignacioun, founder of  
 In his place thei sette oon Danaus, Argos,  
 Sone and eek heir onto the god Belus.
- The peeppe off malis dēde hym so encoumbre, 1772 had fifty  
 Tencrece his sorwe and his aduersite, daughters,  
 And fifti douhtren he hadde also in noumbre, who married  
 And Egistus his brother, eek parde the fifty sons  
 Hadde fifti sones, the story ye may see, of Egyptus.  
 Atween the which bi surete off hond 1776  
 In mariage there was maad a bond,  
 Vndir which compassid was tresoun,  
 Couertli thouh thei dede it hide. 1780 You will find  
 But yiff ye list han cleer inspeccioun their story in  
 Off this story vpon eueri side, Chaucer,  
 Redith the legende of martirs off Cupide,  
 Which that Chaucer, in ordre as thei stood, 1784  
 Compiled off women that were callid good.

1752. Erisiton] Grisiton J, P, Grisitoun H 5, Herisiten R 3.

1755. fame] name R.

1771. the] om. R.

1783. Redith] Reed R —off] & R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 10 recto.

who also  
told the  
tale of  
Philomela  
and Procne.

¶ Touchyng the story off kyng Pandioun,  
And off his goodli faire douhtren tweyne,  
How Thereus, fals off condicioun, 1788  
Hem to deceyue dede his besi payne,  
Thei bothe namyd, off beute souereyne,  
Goodli Progne and yong[e] Philomene,  
Bothe innocentis and off entent ful cleene. 1792

It were pre-  
sumption for  
me to tell it  
again.

Ther pitous fate in open to expresse,  
It were to me but a presumpcioun,  
Sithe that Chaucer dede his besynesse  
In his legende, as maad is menciou[n], 1796  
Ther martirdam and ther passioun,  
For to reherse\* hem dede his besy payne,  
As cheef poete callid off Breteyne.

I will go on  
to Cadmus;

Off goode women a book he dede write, [p. 24] 1800  
The noubre compleet\* fully off nynteene;  
And there the story he pley[n]li dede endite  
Off Tereus, off Progne &\* Philomeene,  
Where ye may seen ther legende, thus I meene, 1804  
Doth hem worshepe & foorth ther liff doth shewe  
For a cleer merour, because ther be so fewe.

but I am  
sorry that  
there are so  
few good  
women to  
write about.

I will passe ouer and speke off hem no more,  
And onto Cadmus foorth my stile dresse — 1808  
Yit in my writyng it greueth me sore,  
Touchyng off women off feith or stabilnesse, —  
Blessid be God, — I fynde noon excesse;  
And for ther been so fewe, as thynkith me, 1812  
The goode sholde been had in mor deynte.

### ¶ Lenvoy.

This tragedy  
told about  
Saturn,

THIS tragedie bereth to you wisesse,  
How Saturnus bi disposicioun,  
Maliciousli of his frowardnesse 1816  
Causith in Iune ful gret infeccioun,  
She off nature conueieth the venym doun,  
The hair infect, which no man may socoure,  
Kometh deth a-noon, & all thyng doth deuoure. 1820

1787. And] *om.* H. 1798. reherse] rehersen B, R.

1801. compleet] vncompleet B, J, vncomplet H 5.

1802. pley[n]ly he did H.

1803. Tereus] Terence H, Therence R 3, P, Theseus J, H 5 —

&] & off B, R, H. 1804. ther] be H.



Tyme from Adam, myn auctour doth expresse,  
 Doun to Nembroth bi successioun,  
 His stile conueied bi gret auysynesse,  
 From Zorastres to kyng Pharaoun; 1824  
 Off too deluges he maketh menciou, two deluges,  
 In Thesalie the vengauce gan laboure,  
 And in Achaia Thebes to deuoure.  
 Ye haue off hetis herd the gret excesse, 1828 and the  
 Off pryncis, pryncessis ful gret destruccioun, destruction  
 Off Egistus the gret[e] wrechidnesse, of princes  
 The furie off Tereus, the wo off Pandioun, and princesses  
 Off the too sustren the confusioun, 1832  
 And how ther fate gan vpon hem loure,  
 Ther felicite vnwarli to deuoure.  
 Pryncis, Pryncessis, your eyen doth up dresse —  
 I meene the eyen off your discrecioun — 1836 Princes, re-  
 Seeth off this world the chaung, the doubilnesse, member that  
 The gret onseurnesse, the variacioun, Fortuna is  
 And aduertisith, for al your hih renoun, deceitful.  
 Fortunes dewes, whan thei most suetli shoure, 1840  
 Than is she falsest, your glorië\* to deuoure.

[How Iubiter rauished Europe, and how Cadmus  
 was sent/to seke hir in diuers Regions.]<sup>1</sup>

**B**E rehersaile off many an old poete,  
 Be discent the lyne conueied doun,  
 Next Saturnus, the myhti kyng off Crete, 1844  
 Ioue was crownyd bi successioun,  
 As next heir bi procreacioun,  
 Aftir his fadir the lond to enherite,\*  
 Regned in Crete, as poetis list to write. 1848  
 Sone off the lynage, as I you tolde afforn,  
 Off the goddis most souereyn and enteere, and chose  
 Yit thouh he was off blood so hih I-born, Europa to be  
 He ches Europa for to been his feere, 1852 his wife.  
 And doun descendid from his heuenli speere,  
 As he that was, for al his deite,  
 Supprisid in herte with hir gret beute.

1831. Tereus] Thereus R, H, R 3, P, J, H 5 — furie] furies H.

1832. 2nd the] off R.

1835. The second line of this stanza misplaced at end, H.

1841. gloire B. 1847. tenherite B.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 10 verso.

She was a  
daughter of  
Agenor.

And she was douhter to the myhti kyng 1856  
Callid Agenor, by lyneal discent,  
Whos myhti kyngdam & roial fair duellyng  
Was in Phenice toward the orient;  
And to Arabie his land was adiacent, 1860  
Ferre\* be south, as ye may reede and see,  
Toward the parties of the Rede Se.

Jupiter took  
her by force  
from her  
father,

But Iubiter, whan he dede aduerte 1864  
Off Europa the gret[e] semlynesse,  
Hym thouhte he was woundid thoruh the herte  
Onto the deth, beholdyng hir fairnesse,  
And for his constreynt, & his mortal distresse,  
Seyng she was so fair founde\* in his siht, 1868  
He rauesshid hire off veray force & myht.

But Agenor, hir owyn fadir deere,  
Gan on this cas ful pitously compleyne,  
Whan she, allas, most goodli and enteere, 1872  
Was hym berafft, which doublid al his peyne;  
Recur was noon, thouh he dede pleyne,  
Til he, remembrynge in his regalie,  
Thouhte he wolde senden to espie 1876

who told his  
son Cadmus  
to bring her  
back or him-  
self never to  
return home  
again.

His sone Cadmus hir to recure ageyn,  
For to serche hire in many a regeoun,  
Wherso his labour were fructuous or in veyn. 1880  
His fadir sette hym a fell condicioun,  
Nat to retourne bi noon occasioun, —  
And therupon maad hym to be bounde, —  
Til that he hadde the kyngis douhter founde.

Cadmus set  
out

He took his shippis bi gret auysynesse, [p. 25] 1884  
And gan to saile be many a straunge se,  
Dede his labour and his besynesse,  
With many a worthi that were with hym preue;  
But whan that he off resoun dede see, 1888  
Ther was no mene for which that he was sent,  
For tacomplisshe the fyn off his entent,

bravely  
towards  
Grece

With glad[e] herte, deuoid off al gruchyng, 1892  
Seyng the cas froward and contraire,  
Humble off [his] cheer[e] took his exilyng,

1861. Ferre be south] For be south B, For be sothe R, for to  
be South P, For to be sought R 3.  
1868. founde] foundyn B, founden R, H.  
1871. Gan] Can R. 1873. berauft H. 1874. And recur R 3.  
1877. recure] espian H. 1878. a] om. H.

And off manhod list nat hymself dispaire,  
But with his meyne knyhtli gan repaire  
Toward Grece, & proudli ther to londe,  
Off Appollo for to vndirstonde,

1896

To what parti that he myhte drawe.  
He praied the god to wissyn hym & reede,  
Sum tokne shewe or sum maner lawe,  
Onto what ile that he myhte hym speede;  
Or that he wolde graciously hym leede  
Where-as he myhte bilden a cite,  
That were accordyng for hym & his meyne.

1900

and asked  
Apollo to  
tell him  
where

1904

And to Appollo he dede sacrefise,  
And<sup>o</sup> maad to hym his oblacioun,  
The god requeryng goodli to deuise,  
To what lond or to what regeoun  
For his duellyng and habitacioun  
He sholde drawe, withoute mor obstacle,  
For hym and hise to make his habitacle.

1908

he and his  
people should  
dwell.

And Cadmus thus tofforn Appollo stood,  
Knelyng a-mong with ful gret reuerence,  
And in the temple off Delphos stille a-bod,  
With humble attendaunce & deuout dilligence  
Meekli besekyng,\* bi woord or sum\* sentence,  
That Appollo to hym wolde onclose,  
To what parti he sholde hymself dispose.

1912

1916

This was his answeere in conclusioun,  
As the statue to hym dede expresse:  
To goon and serche contrees enviroun,  
And til he fond, doon his besynesse,  
A bole that were excellyng of fairnesse,  
Which, bi precept off Appollos lawe,  
Hadde neuer afforn in no yok Idrawe.

1920

1924

Apollo told  
Cadmus to  
search for a  
bull that  
had never  
drawn in  
yoke,

And where that euer sekynge that he fond  
A bole stonde stille in his pasture,  
Appollo bad vpon the same lond,  
Where-as he sauh this sihte off auenture,  
That he sholde doon his besi cure  
To bilde a cite, he and his folkis all,  
And Boecia, afftir the bole, it call.

1928

1932

and, where  
he found  
him, to  
build a city,

1899. &] or H. 1916. besekyng] abidyng B, R, H — sum]  
bi sum B, R, J. 1917. onclose] enclose R.  
1920. As] And R. 1926. 1st that] om. H.

- which he did, And whan that Cadmus the precept vndirstood,  
 And in serchyng dede his besynesse,  
 He fond a place where-as a bole stood  
 Fedyng hymselff, which as bi liklynnesse 1936  
 Was a place ful plesant off largesse,  
 Wher-as he stynte and gan a cite reise,  
 Which that poetis gretli comende & preise.
- And that his bilydyng myhte the more auaile, 1940  
 Alle tho foreyns that dede a-boute hym duelle,  
 Ful lik a knyht, be force and be bataile  
 Out off that cuntre he dede hem expelle,  
 Reisyng a cite which that dede excelle, 1944  
 And as Ouide recordeth eek the same,  
 Into this day off Thebes berith the name.
- Cadmus was  
 a great and  
 wise man And he was nat onli glorefied  
 For reryng up off this grete cite, 1948  
 But he was also gretli magnefied  
 For his manhod and magnanymyte,  
 And most comendid, yiff ye list to see,  
 For the surmounytyng famous excellence 1952  
 Which that he hadde in wisdam & science.
- and invented  
 laws and an  
 alphabet. For as myn auctour list off hym endite,  
 Thoruh his noble prudent purueiance  
 He tauhte figures & lettris for to write, 1956  
 And made lawes off ful gret ordynance  
 A-mong the Grekis, and sette gouernance  
 Ther vicious liff bi vertu to restreyne;  
 And who outraied was punshid with the peyne. 1960
- He married  
 Hermione And off entent tencrecen his lynage,  
 And his cite also to multeplie,  
 He took a wiff, that was but yong off age,  
 And she was callid, as bqokis specefie, 1964  
 Hermione; and touchyng hir allie,  
 Thouh that she were born off roial blood,  
 She was also bothe inly fair and good.
- at about the  
 time of the  
 death of  
 Joshua, And this was doon, as writith myn  
 auctour, [p. 26] 1968  
 Afftir the deth of worthi Iosue,  
 Gothonyel beyng his successour,

1934. serchyng] sechyng H.

1941. tho] þe J, the R 3, H 5.

Hauyng the ledyng and the souereynte  
Off Israel whan Thebes the cite  
Was foundid first in tho daies olde  
Bi kyng Cadmus, tofforn as I you tolde.

1972

Foure douhtren he hadde be his lyue,  
Ful faire echon and goodli on to see;  
And ther names to rehersen blyue,  
Semele was eldest, and next Authonoe,  
The thridde in ordre was callid Ynoe,  
And Agaue was yongest off hem all,  
Off which[e] douhtres thus [it] is be-fall:

1976

and had four daughters,

Thei were echon off port & off maneer  
Ful weel fauoured in euery manys siht,  
Riht womanli and heuenli of ther cheer;  
And for ther beute, ther fadir anoon riht,  
As it was sitting, with al his ful[le] myht,  
Lik ther estatis, ther berthe & eek ther age,  
Maad hem be weddid & ioyned in mariage

1980

who were very beautiful

To worthi pryncis, his lynage to auauunce.  
And thei encreced bi procreacioun,  
Wheroff the kyng hadde ful gret plesaunce  
And gret reioishyng in his opynyoun  
To seen his lyne bi generacioun,  
With his newewes & cōsyns off allie,  
Fro day to day so wexe and multeplie.

1984

1988

and became the wives of worthy princes.

And this encreced his felicitye,  
Whan he considred verrali in deede  
The riche bildyng off his roial cite,  
And how Fortune dede his bridil leede  
To gret richesse, in bookis as I reede,  
To gret noblesse, hauyng residence  
In his cite off most magnyficence.

1992

1996

Cadmus prospered.

His douhter Semele, record off myn auctour,  
Thouh she descendid were off the blood roiall,  
To Iubiter she was paramour,  
And bi his power aboue celestiall,  
She conceyued in especiall,  
As poetis list off hire tendite,  
Hym that is god off grapis rede & white,

2000

2004

His daughter Semele had a son, Bacchus, by Jupiter,

2008

1971. 2nd the] om. R. 1973. foundid] founden R.

1981. it] om. R.

2000. the t in gret stuck in scribe's pen H.

Callid Bachus, which hath the gouernaunce  
Off wynis alle and the regalie.

Wheroff afftir ther fill ful gret vengauce: 2012

[For] whan Iuno dede first espie

Off Iubiter the grete auoutrie,

Off gret hatrede and envious desir,

She made Semeles be brent with sodeyn fir, 2016

but Iuno in  
her anger  
caused Semele  
to be burnt  
up together  
with her  
palace.

Bi descendyng off a sodeyn leuene,

Wherthoruh hir paleis was into assches brent —

The vnwar strook cam down fro [the] heuene, 2020

And on Semeles the vengauce is down went;

And or the flawme consumed was & spent,

Ther was off hir lefft no remembraunce,

But off hir eende the woful mortal chaunce.

Actæon, son  
of Autonoe  
and Aristæus,  
was devoured  
by hounds.

¶ Eek Antheon, sone off Authonoe, 2024

To gret[e] myscheeff and infortune born,

Whos fadir was callid Eristee,

Come off the kynrede that I you tolde afforn;

With cruel houndis, allas, he was to-torn, 2028

For that he sauh, as bookis off hym tell,

Diane nakid bathe hire in a well.

Agave, the  
youngest  
sister,

And as poetis remembryn atte leste,

Whan the ladies off Thebes the cite 2032

Heeld off Bachus solempneli the feste,

The yongest suster, callid Agaue,

Douhter to Cadmus, — allas, it was pite! —

Ageyn Pantheus, hir\* owyn sone deere, 2036

She wex so wood & mortal off hir cheere,

murdered her  
son Pentheus  
because he  
laughed at  
the women  
of Thebes  
when they  
sacrificed to  
Bacchus.

Moordryng hym in ful cruel wise,

In hir rage she was so furious:

For he louh[e] at the sacrefise 2040

In Thebes doon bi women to Bachus;

The which[e] sone was callid Pantheus,

Whom that she slouh with a ful sharp[e] dart,

In hir woodnesse, as she hym fond a-part. 2044

Thus Cadmus  
fell into  
great trouble.

These grete myscheuys fellyn in the lyne

Off kyng Cadmus thoruh his onhappi chaunce;

Fortune his noblesse gan to vndirmyne,

2010. hath the] that hath R.

2013. For] *om.* H, R. 2018, 19] *om.* J.

2019. 2nd the] *om.* H, R. P. 2030. in] at H.

2036. hir] his B, R — Pantheus] *om.* J.



And thouhte she wolde his glory disauaunce. 2048 Fortune, the  
 Al worldli gladnesse is medlid with greuaunce, false  
 Experience in Cadmus ye may see, enchantress,  
 So importable was his aduersite. undermined  
 his prosperity.

For whil he sat most hiest in his glory, [p. 27] 2052  
 No parti clipped off his prosperite,  
 His briht renoun and his roial memory  
 In rewmis sprad and many ferr cuntre,  
 And he most welful in his kynгли see 2056  
 Sat with his lynage, most hih in his noblesse,  
 Than cam Fortune, the fals enchaunteresse,

Off wilfulnesse, and fond occasioun  
 A-geyn this Cadmus, & maad his renoun dulle, 2060  
 And off his kynrede, bi fals collusioun,  
 She gan a-wey the brihtest fethres pulle;  
 And whan his shynyng was wexe up to the fulle,  
 Afftir the chaung off Fortunys lawe, 2064  
 His glory gan discrecen and withdrawe.

It was mor greuous to his dignite,  
 A sodeyn fall from his hih noblesse,  
 Than yiff that he neuer hadde be 2068  
 Set in thestat off [so] gret worthynesse;  
 For the furious mortal heuynesse  
 Off his kynreede, withoutyn any more,  
 Wolde haue greued a poore man ful sore. 2072

And a-mong his sorwes euerichon,  
 To reherse pleykli as it was,  
 I dar afferme how that there was oon,  
 Most horrible & dreedful in such cas; 2076  
 For Cadmus sone, callid Athamas,  
 His sone-in-lawe, thoruh fals malencolie  
 Fill sodenli into a frenesie.

Off whom the wiff was callid Ynoe, 2080 who thought,  
 Cadmus douhter, as ye han herd expresse, his wife a  
 Which thoruh the constreynt off his infirmite, lioness and  
 In his rage and furious woodnesse his sons lions,  
 Thouhte that his wiff was a leonesse, 2084  
 And in his wilde ymagynaciouns,  
 That his too childre were also too leouns.

2052. his glory] hiest R. 2062. brihtest] briht H.  
 2069. thestat] the staat J, the state P — so] om. R.  
 2085. wilde] wood R — ymaginacion R.

and slew his  
son Learchus.

And vpon hem ful loude he gan to crie,  
Toward his wiff in haste he ran anon, 2088  
And from hir armys, ther was no remedie,  
The child he rente, and on a craggi ston  
He gan\* to brose it and breke it eueri bon.  
The which[e] child, Bochas writith thus, 2092  
Ful tendir and yong, was callid Learchus.

Ino fled with  
her other  
son.

And off this woful sodeyn auenture  
Off his rage, whan that [s]he took heed,  
As most sorweful off any creature, 2096  
Hir othir child she hente anoon for dreed;  
For off socour she knew no betir speed,  
So as she myhte gan haste out off his siht.  
But wellaway, as she took hir to fliht, 2100

They fell  
into the sea  
and were  
drowned.

Hir husbonde cam afftir pursuyng  
Lich a wood leoun in his cruelte;  
Doun from a mounteyn, which was dependyng,  
She and hir child fill into the se. 2104  
Was it nat routhe, was it nat pite,  
A kyngis douhter, hir lord in Thebes crownyd,  
He to be wood and she for feer so drownyd!

Thus the joy of  
Cadmus was  
tempered  
with sorrow.

Loo, heer the fyn off Cadmus euerideel, 2108  
His childre slayn and his allies all,  
And he hymself[e] fro Fortunys wheel,  
Whan he lest wende, ful sodenli is fall,  
His litil sugir temprid with moch gall: 2112  
For a-mong[es] all his mortal peynes,  
His liege-men, off Thebes citeseynes,

Finally he  
and his  
wife were  
exiled

Made ageyn hym a conspiracioun,  
Put hym in exil and his wiff also, 2116  
His sonys, his douhtris brouht to destruccioun;  
And to thencrecyng off his dedli wo,  
He and his wiff compellid bothe too  
For verray pouert and verray indigence 2120  
In ther last age to purchase ther dispence.

and died in  
poverty.

Thus [of] Cadmus the sorwes to descryue  
And his myscheeff to putte in remembraunce,  
He banshid was twies bi his lyue, 2124

2089. hir] ther R. 2090. craggi] cragge R.  
2091. He gan] Began B, R—brose] briste J, bris R 3, bruise P.  
2095. she] he H, R. 2096. As] Was H. 2109. children R.  
2109. all] om. R. 2120. verray] varrei R.  
2122. of] om. R.

First bi his fadris cruel ordynaunce  
 Off his suster to maken enqueraunce,  
 And althirlast in his vnweeldi age  
 He was compellid to holden his passage 2128

Out off Thebes, his wiff and he allone,  
 In sorwe & wepyng taccomplissh up ther daies.  
 Into Illirie to-gidre thei be gone,  
 Ther pacience put at fell assaies, 2132

Whos bittirnesse felte noon allaies.  
 Eek off ther eende nor ther vnhappi fate,  
 Nor off ther deth I fynde noon other date,

Sauff that Ouide maketh menciou<sup>n</sup>, [p. 28] 2136 But Ovid  
 And Iohn Bochas the poete excellent says that  
 Seith that the\* brethre, Zeto & Amphiou<sup>n</sup>, the gods had  
 Out off Thebes, bothe bi oon assent, mercy on  
 Haue\* this Cadmus into exil sent, them and  
 His wiff also, afftir ther hih noblesse, transformed  
 To eende her liff in sorwe and wrechidnesse. them into  
 2140 serpents.

But the goddis, off merci and pite,  
 Whan thei hem sauh bi Fortune so cast doun 2144  
 From ther estatis into pouerte,  
 Hauyng off hem ful gret compassiou<sup>n</sup>,  
 Thei made a-noon a transformaciou<sup>n</sup>  
 Off bothe tweyne, hem, yeuyng the liknesse 2148  
 Off serpentis, to lyue in wildirnesse.

### ¶ Lenvoye.

**O** WHAT estat may hymself assure  
 For to conserue his liff in sekirnesse?  
 What worldli ioie may heer long endure, 2152  
 Or wher shal men now fynde stabilnesse,  
 Sithe kyngis, pryncis from ther hih noblesse —  
 Record off Cadmus — beeft sodenli brouht lowe  
 And from the wheel off Fortune ouerthrowe? 2156

Who may susteene the pitous auenture  
 Off this tragedie be writyng to expresse?  
 Is it nat lik onto the chaunteplure,  
 Gynnyng with ioie, eendyng in wrechidnesse? — 2160  
 Al worldli blisse is meynt with bittirnesse,

What estate  
 may live in  
 security?

All worldly  
 happiness is  
 mingled with  
 sorrow,

2126. Inqueraunce H.

2138. the] thee B, thre H, R, two P.

2140. Haue] Hath B, han H, J. 2143. and] & off R.

The sodeyn chaung no man theroff may knowe;  
For who sit hiest is sonest ouerthrowe.

therefore, O  
Lords, be-  
ware the  
fate of those  
whom  
Fortune cast  
from her  
wheel.

Was in this world yit neuer creature, 2164  
Rekne up pryncis, for al ther hih noblesse  
Fortune koude recleyme hem to hir lure  
And emporisshe thoruh hir frowardnesse.  
Wherefore, ye Lordis, for\* al your gret richesse, 2168  
Beth war afforn or ye daunce on the rowe  
Off such as Fortune hath from hir wheel throwe.

[A processe of Oetes kyng of Colchos, Iason, Medee,  
Theseus, Scilla Nisus, and other moo.]<sup>1</sup>

WHAN Iohn Bochas was most dilligent  
To conside the successiouns 2172  
Off lynages, with all his hool entent,  
In his writyng and descripciouns  
To compile the generaciouns  
Of many noble, famous off estat — 2176  
I meene off such as were infortunat, —

Æetes, king  
of Colchos,

In his serchyng he fond nat a fewe  
That were vnhappi founde in ther lyuyng;  
To his presence a-noon ther gan hem\* shewe 2180  
A multitude ful pitousli wepyng,  
A-mongis which, ful doolfully pleynyng,  
Cam first Oetes, and hath his compleynt gunne,  
Kyng off Colchos and sone onto the sunne. 2184

son of Apollo,

For off Phebus, which is so briht & cleer,  
Poetis write that he was sone and heir,  
Because he was so myhti off poweer,  
So fressh, so lusti, so manli [and] so feir; 2188  
But off Fortune he fill in gret dispeir,  
Cursyng his fate and his destyne,  
Whan Iason first entrid his cuntre,

Be Pelleus sent fro Thesalie, 2192  
Ther for taccomplisshe be dilligent labour  
The grete emprises thoruh his cheualrie,

2166. recleyme] recline R. 2168. for] with B, R, J, H 5.  
2170. as Fortune] fortune as R — as] om. J — throwe] ouer-  
browe J, H 5. 2180. hem] hym B, R, H 5, him J, them P.  
2183. compleynt] playnte R.  
2188. lusti manli and riȝt faier J, H 5 — and] om. H, R, R 3.  
2191. Iason] Iosan R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 12 recto.

Yiff God and Fortune list doon to hym fauour,  
That he myhte wynnē the tresour:  
This is to meene, that he were so bold  
The ram tassaile which bar the Flees of Gold.

2196

This said Iason thoruh\* counseil off Mede,  
Bi sorcery and incantacioun

2200

was despoiled  
of the Golden  
Fleece by  
Jason,

The boolis slouh, horrible for to see,  
And venquysshid the venymous dragoun,  
The kyng despoilid off his possessioun,  
Accomplisshid with carectis & figures  
Off Colchos the dreedful auentures.

2204

And afftirward, whan he his purpos hadde,  
He leffte Oetes in ful gret dispair,  
And Medea foorth with hym he ladde  
And hir brother, which was the kyngis hair.  
But as I fynde, how in his repair,  
Out off Colchos whan thei gan remue,  
Kyng Oetes afftir hem gan sue.

2208

who led  
away his  
daughter  
Medea.

Vpon Iason auenged for to be,  
Withoute tarieng, he folwid hem proudly;  
The which[e] thyng whan Iason dede see,  
This Medea gan shape a remedy:  
She took hir brothir & slouh hym cruely,  
And hym dismembrid, as bookis make mynde,  
And pecemeel in a feeld behynde

2212

Medea slew  
her brother

She gan hym caste, al bespreynt with  
blood. [p. 29]

2116

to stay her  
father's  
pursuit.

Wheroff his fader whan he hadde a siht,  
Ful pale off cheer, stille in the feeld he stood,  
Whil she and Iason took hem onto fliht —  
I trowe that tyme the moste woful wiht  
That was a-lyue, whan he dede knowe  
His child dismembrid and a brood Isowe!

2220

2224

Which cause was, alas and wellaway!  
That he so stynte, as man disconsolat,  
Whil that Iason fro Colchos went a-way.  
And Medea, most infortunat,  
Was ground and roote off this mortal debat:

2228

2195. to] *om.* R. 2197. is] *om.* R.

2199. This] The H — saide] *om.* J, H 5 — thoruh] thoruh  
the B, H, R, R 3.

2204. carectis] carecters R3, charactes P.

For who sauh euer or radde off such a-nothir, 2232  
To saue a straunger list to slen hir brothir?

Her love of  
Jason was  
the cause of  
it all.

Forsook hir fader, hir contre & kynreede,  
The lond enporished thoruh hir robberie;  
Off hir worshep she took noon othir heed, 2236  
Loue had hir brouht in such a fantasie.

And whil that she a-bood in Thesalie  
And with Iason dede ther soiourne,  
She made Eson to youthe to retourne. 2240

Afterwards  
Medea re-  
stored Eson  
to youth

A yerde she took, that was drie and old,  
And in hir herbis and commixciouns\*  
She made it boile, in Ouide it is told,  
And bi carectis and incantaciouns, 2244  
And with the crafft off hir coniurisouns  
The yerde be-gan [to] budde & blosme newe  
And to bere frut and leuys fresh off hewe.

And semblabli with hir confecciouns 2248

His olde humours she hath depurid cleene,  
And with hir lusti fresh[e] pocious  
His empti skyn, tremblyng & riht leene,  
Pale and wan, that no blood was seene, 2252  
But as it were a dedli creature —  
Al this hath she transfformyd bi nature.

Made hym lusti and fressh off his corage,  
Glad off herte, liffli off cheer and siht, 2256  
Riht weel hewed and cleer off his visage,  
Wonder delyuer bothe off force & myht,  
In all his membris as weeldi & as lyht  
As euer he was, and in the same estat, 2260  
Bi crafft off Mede he was so alterat.

and caused  
the death of  
Pelias, Jason's  
uncle,

Afttir al this, a-geyn kyng Pelleus  
She gan maligne, vnclie onto Iason;  
And off envie she procedith thus: 2264  
The kyngis douhtren\* she drow to hir anoon,  
Hem counsailid that thei sholde goon  
Onto ther fadir & pleynli to hym seyn,  
Yiff he desirid to be yong a-geyn. 2268

2234. 2nd hir] *om.* H. 2238. that] *om.* R.  
2242. in] wip J — *in commixciouns the 2nd c is formed like t in*  
B, H, J. 2244. carectis] charactes P. 2246. to] *om.* R, H.  
2249. humours] humorus R. 2250. hir] his H.  
2265. douhtren] douhter R, douhtren H, daughters  
P, R 3, H 5 — drow] drawip J.



- Ful restored his force to recure  
 And therewithal in lusti age floure,  
 She behihte to doon hir besi cure  
 Lik his desir to helpyn and socoure,  
 And in this mateer so crafft[i]li laboure,  
 Fynali stonde in the same caas  
 To be maad yong, lik as his brothir was. 2272
- Touchyng which thyng, for mor euydence  
 This Medea hath to the douhtren told,  
 Off entent to yeue the mor credence,  
 She bad hem take a ram that wer riht old,  
 And with a knyff for to be so bold 2280  
 To steen this beeste afforn hem ther he stood,  
 And in a vessel drawe out his olde blood,
- Fulli affermyng lik as it wer trewe,  
 That he sholde been a lamb a-geyn. 2284  
 For she be crafft wolde his blood renewe  
 In such wise be euidence pleyne  
 That off elde no tokne shal be seyn —  
 In al his membris as lusti and enter 2288  
 As was a lamb euyd off o yeer.
- And therupon in ful sleihti wise  
 She gan a processe off ful fals tresoun,  
 The sustre made vpon this ram practise, 2292  
 Drouh out his blood lik her entencioun;  
 And she bi crafft off fals illusioun  
 Blent her eyen bi apperence in veyn  
 The olde ram to seeme a lamb a-geyn. 2296
- Thus Medea be sleihte compassyng,  
 Off envie and venymous hatreede,  
 Excitid hath the sustre in werkyng,  
 A-geyn ther fadir mortali to proceede. 2300  
 With sharp[e] knyuis thei made her fader bleede,  
 Mid the herte thoruhout euery veyne,  
 Supposyng, the celi sustren tweyne,
- That Pelleus renewed sholde be [p. 30] 2304  
 To youthe a-geyn off force & off substaunce.  
 But fynali bi tresoun off Mede

by promising  
 his daughters  
 to make him  
 young like  
 his brother,

persuading  
 them

to kill their  
 father.

2272. his] hir H. 2275. his] hir H. 2285. For] & H.  
 2289. euyd] yewide R 3, yened P, eyned J, H 5.  
 2299. sustre] sustren H, sustres H 5, susters P.  
 2300. to] om. H, R 3. 2305. youht geyn R.

He lost\* his liffe, such was his woful chaunce;  
 For she it wrouhte onli off vengauunce, 2308  
 As roote & ground off this cruel deede,  
 A-geyn the\* nature off al\* womanheede.

Medea  
 thought this  
 would please  
 Jason, but  
 it did not.

Supposyng in hir opynyoun,  
 How that the deth gretli sholde plesse 2312  
 Off Pelleus onto hir lord Iasoun,  
 Thoruh gret encres sette his herte at ese;  
 But it rebounded into his disese,  
 That fynali Iason hir forsook 2316  
 For hir offence, and he his weye took

He left her  
 and went to  
 Corinth,  
 where he  
 married  
 Creusa,  
 whom Medea  
 burnt up  
 in revenge.

Into Corynthe, toward the kyng Creon,  
 Whos douhter Creusa, for hir gret beute,  
 Was afftirward iweddidd to Iason. 2320  
 But whan this wedding was knowe to Mede,  
 Caste she wolde theron auengid be,  
 Gan to conspire off malis and envie,  
 And thoruh hir magik and [hir] sorcerie, 2324

In ful gret haste gan [for] to ordeyne  
 A litil coffre, onli off entent;  
 And bi hir yonge faire sonys tweyne,  
 With othere iewelis, she hath the coffre sent, 2328  
 Onto Creusa makyng a present,  
 Which off malis she list so dispose,  
 That whan Creusa the coffre dede onclose,

The fir brast out a ful large space, 2332  
 Brent Creusa bi ful gret violence,  
 Set a-fire pleyntli al the place  
 Benchauntement; ther\* was no resistance —  
 Al wente affire that was in hir presence, 2336  
 Bi vengeance dede ful gret damage.  
 But whan Iason the fir sauh in his rage,

Jason wanted  
 to punish  
 her,

And considred the maliſ off Mede,  
 Thouhte he wolde doon execucioun 2340  
 For to punshe the gret iniquite  
 A-geyn[e]s hym compassid off tresoun;  
 For she off vengeance, a-geyn[es] al resoun,

2307. lost] leffte B, R. 2309. &] off R.

2310. the] om. B — al] al good B, R.

2312. that] at R. 2314. encres] ences R — at] in R.

2322. theron] om. R. 2324. hir] om. R, H.

2325. for] om. J, R. 2335. ther] pleyntli ther B, R.

- Afftir that Creusa consumed was & brent, 2344  
 Hir owne sonys, which she hadde sent,  
 Withoute routhe or womanli pite,  
 She falsli moordred — the childre that she bar — especially as  
 Lik a stepmooder auenged for to be, 2348 she murdered  
 Cutte ther throtis or that thei wer war, her two sons  
 A-geyn nature, ther was noon othir spaar, out of hatred  
 But for hatreede she hadde onto Iason. to him.  
 Afftir this moordre she fledde hir way a-noon, 2352  
 So escapyng his indignacioun.  
 Be crafft off magik she wente at liberte But she es-  
 To Athenys, and in that regioun caped to  
 She-weddid was onto the kyng Egee. Athens,  
 2356 married  
 Nat longe afftir bi hym a sone had she, Ægeus  
 The which[e] child, myn auctour tellith thus,  
 Afftir Medea callid was Medus.  
 Afftir whos name the famous regioun 2360  
 I-named was, which is callid Meede.  
 But folwyng ay hir olde condicioun,  
 This Medea, void off shame & dreede, and tried to  
 Compassid hath off wilful fals\*hatreede, 2364 poison her  
 That Theseus, the sone off kyng Egee, stepson  
 With newe poisoun shal deuoured be. Theseus, who  
 escaped.  
 But Theseus, ful lik a manli knyht,  
 In repayryng hom to his contre, 2368  
 Off hih prudence espied a-noon ryht  
 The mortal vengance, the gret[e] cruelte  
 Off his stepmooder, which off enmite  
 Concludid\* hath in hir entencioun 2372  
 Hym to destroye onwarli with poisoun.  
 Hir herte off malis, cruel & horrible,  
 As she that was with tresoun euer allied,  
 Whan that she sauh hir purpos most odible 2376  
 Be kyng Egeus fulli was espied, She then  
 She hath hir herte & wittis newe applied, went back  
 As in ther bookis poetis han compiled, to Jason.  
 A-geyn to Iason to be reconsiled. 2380  
 She fledde away for dred off Theseus,  
 List he hadde doon on hir vengauunce,  
 And fynali, as writ Ouidius,

2352. hir way] away H. 2361. callid is J, called is P.

2372. Concludid] Concludyng B, R.

And moral Senec concludith in substaunce, 2384  
 In his tragedies making remembrance,  
 How Medea, lik as poetis seyn,  
 Onto Iason restored was a-geyn.

Poets do not  
 tell how it  
 was that  
 they were  
 reconciled.

Touchyng the eende off ther furious  
 discord, [p. 31] 2388

It must  
 have been  
 through  
 sorcery.

Poetis make theroff no menciou  
 Nor telle no mene how thei fill at accord,  
 But yiff it were bi incantacioun,  
 Which so weel koude turne up-so-doun 2392  
 Sundry thyngis off loue & off hatreede.  
 And in Bochas off hir no mor I reede,

Sauff whan she hadde fulfillid hir purpos,  
 Myn auctour tellith, that Iason & Mede 2396  
 Resorted han a-geyn onto Colchos  
 Hir fadir Oetes, & from his pouerte  
 Brouht hym a-geyn into his roial see,  
 And to his crowne bi force thei hym restore: 2400  
 Touchyng his eende, off hym I fynde\* no more.

At any rate,  
 they restored  
 Æetes to his  
 throne.

Thus his fortune hath turnyd to and fro,  
 First lik a kyng hauyng ful gret richesse,  
 Affir lyuyng in pouert and in wo, 2404  
 Sithen restorid to his worthynesse:  
 Thus ay is sorwe medlid with gladnesse,  
 Who can aduerte, in al worldli thyng,  
 Record off Mynos, the noble worthi kyng. 2408

Now I shall  
 turn to  
 Minos, son  
 of Jupiter  
 and Europa.

**T**O whom I muste now my stile dresse,  
 Folwen the trais off Bochacius,  
 The which[e] Mynos, as Ouide doth expresse,  
 Touchyng his birthe writ[eth] pley[n]li thus, 2412  
 That he was manli, wis and vertuous,  
 Sone bi discent off Iubiter the grete,  
 And off Europa born to been heir in Crete.

Off his persone wonder delectable, 2416  
 Ful renommed off wisdam and science,  
 Bi dyuers titles off laude comendable  
 Off birthe, off blood, off knyhtod & prudence;  
 For bi his study and enter dilligence 2420  
 He fond first lawes groundid on resoun,  
 Werbi off Crete the grete regioun

He was king  
 of Crete and

2390. at] om. R. 2401. I fynde] fynde I B, R, J.  
 2412. writeth] writ R. 2419. &] of H.

- Gouernyd was and set in stabilnesse.  
 Alle iniuries and wrongis to refourme, 2424 governed his subjects well.  
 Made statutis extorsious to repressse,  
 Off rihtwisnesse thei took ther firste fourme,  
 And that ech man sholde hymself confourme  
 Lik ther degrees, subiect and souerayne, 2428  
 That no man hadde no mater to complayne.
- He made his liges to lyuen in quieete,  
 Cleer shynying in his roial noblesse,  
 With suerd and sceptre sittying in his seete; 2432 His wife's name was Pasiphae,  
 And whil he floured in his worthynesse  
 He took a wiff off excellent fairnesse,  
 Doughter to Phebus, in Bochas ye may see,  
 And she was callid faire Pasiphe. 2436
- And hir fadir, bi record off writyng,  
 In his tyme was holden ful famous;  
 Off thile off Rodis he was crownyd kyng,  
 And in his daies off port ful glorious, 2440  
 Riht proud in armis and victorious,  
 Takying witnesse Methamorphoseos. by whom he had three children.  
 His douhter hadde thre childre be Mynos,
- The firste a sone callid Androgee, 2444  
 And afftirward ful faire douhtren tweyne,  
 Riht womanli and goodli on to see;  
 But, as Fortune for hem dede ordeyne,  
 Thei felte her lyue gret trouble & [gret] payne — 2448  
 Callid Adriana, and Phedra was the tothir,  
 Folwyng ther fate, it myhte be noon othir.
- Androgeus bi kyng Mynos was sent,  
 For he sholde profityn in clergie, 2452  
 To Athenys off vertuous entent  
 There to studien in philosophie;  
 And for he gan tencrece & multeplie  
 And passe all othir bi studi in lernyng 2456 Their son Androgeus was maliciously slain in Athens,  
 And to excelle his felawes in cunnyng,
- Thei off envie and fals malis, allas,  
 Made a-geyn hym a conspiracioun,  
 And from a pynacle sacrid to Pallas, 2460

2425. repressse] oppresse R. 2439. thile] the yile R.  
 2441. riht victorious H. 2445. douhtre R.  
 2448. 2nd gret] om. R. 2449. that othir R.  
 2450. ther] the H. 2452. sholde] wold R.

Off ful gret heihte, made hym tumble doun.  
 For which iniurie, Bochas maketh mencioun,  
 His fadir Mynos auengid for to be,  
 Leide a gret power a-boute the cite. 2464

for which  
 Minos took  
 revenge.

He caste hym fulli that no man sholde hym lette,  
 But that he wolde doon crueli vengauce;  
 And round a-boute so sore he hem besette  
 With men off armys & with his ordynaunce, 2468  
 That fynali he brouht hem to vttraunce,  
 And them constreynynd, withynne a litil space,  
 Ther liff, ther deth submyttyng to his grace.

Nisus, king  
 of Megara,  
 helped the  
 Athenians,

But whil thei made ageyn hym resistence, [p. 32] 2472  
 Supposyng his power to withstonde,  
 Nisus, that was kyng off Megarence,  
 A-geyn Mynos ther parti took on honde:  
 And offte tymes, as ye shal vndirstonde, 2476  
 Whan kyng Mynos the cite dede assaile,  
 Nisus withynne, with myhti appaile

but his  
 daughter  
 Scylla fell  
 in love with  
 Minos

Vpon the wal stood in his diffence —  
 Whan that Mynos, ful lik a manli knyht, 2480  
 Fauht withoute with sturdi violence,  
 Lich Mars hymself in steel armyd briht.  
 Wheroff whan Scilla onys hadde a siht,  
 Douhtir to Nisus, aduerting his prowesse, 2484  
 A-noon for loue she fill in gret distresse.

She was supprised with his hih noblesse;  
 His manli force, expert many-fold,  
 Set[te] Scilla in gret heuynesse: 2488  
 For loue off Mynos, off poetis it is told,  
 Made hir herte presumen and be bold,  
 First hir-silff to putte in iupartie,  
 Hir fadris liff, the cite, the clergie. 2492

and conspired  
 her father's  
 death,

From hir herte loue hath set a-side,  
 A-geyn nature, hir blood & hir kynreede;  
 And al frenshiþe from hire she gan deuyde,  
 And off hir worship took no maner heede: 2496  
 Loue maad hir cruel, a-geyn al womanheede,  
 First hir herte so sore sette affire,  
 Hir fadres deth falsli to conspire.

2469. vttraunce] variaunce R. 2471. Ther] The H.  
 2474. Magarence H. 2489. 2nd off] in H.  
 2491. iupartie] parti R.



For kyng Mynos beyng a straunger 2500 a strange  
 Was so enprentid in hir opynyoun, thing for a  
 Off creatures ther stood noon so neer; young  
 And for his sake, bi ful fals tresoun, woman to  
 She compassid the destruccioun do,  
 First off hir fadir and off the cite — 2504  
 So straunge a thyng, allas, how myhte it be,  
 That a woman off yeris yong and tendre  
 Koude ymagyne so merueilous a thyng! 2508 (but often  
 But offte it fallith, that creatures sclendre, the most  
 Vnder a face off angelik lokyng, angelic ap-  
 Been verrai wolues outward in werkyng. peering  
 Eek vnder colour off ther port femynyne, creatures  
 Summe be founde verray serpentyne, 2512  
 Lambis in shewyng, shadwid with meeknesse,  
 Cruel as tigres, who doth to hem offence, are as cruel  
 Off humble cheer pretendyng a liknesse. as tigres).  
 But, o allas! what harm doth apparence, 2516  
 What damage doth countirfet innocence,  
 Vndir a mantil shrowdid off womanheed,  
 Whan feyned falsnesse doth ther bridil leed! 2520  
 For this Scilla, the kyngis douhter deere,  
 In whom he sette hool his affeccioun,  
 His hertis ioie, his plesaunce most enteere,  
 His worldli blisse, his consolacioun, — 2524  
 But she al turned to his confusioun,  
 Nat lich a douhter, but lik a sorceresse  
 His deth compassid, the story berth witnesse.  
 Hir fadir hadde a fatal her that shon 2528  
 Brihtere than gold, in which he dede assure  
 Manli to fihte\* a-geyn his mortal fon;  
 For on his hed[e] whil it dede endure,  
 He sholde venquysshe bi manhod, & recure, 2532  
 And thoruh his knythod, to his ences off glory,  
 In euery quarell wynnen the victory.  
 But whil hir fadir kyng Nisus lay & sleep,  
 Vpon a nyht, parcel affor day,  
 Ful secreli, or that he took keep, 2536 she cut  
 The her off gold this Scilla kit away; away the  
 And onto Mynos, armyd wher he lay, fatal hair  
 of gold from  
 Nisus' head.

2530. fihte] fihten B.

2538. kit] did H.

She it presentid thoruh hir ordynaunce, 2540  
Off fals entent hym for to do plesaunce.

and, as Ovid  
tells, took a  
sharp knife  
and killed  
him.

But in this mateer, lik as writ Ouide,  
Methamorphoseos, who-so taketh heed,  
Hir fadir slepyng, she knelyng bi his side, 2544  
Took a sharp knyff withoute feer or dreed,  
Whil he lay nakid, she karff a-too his hed,  
Stal hir way[e] off ful fals entent,  
And to kyng Mynos the hed she doth present. 2548

She presented  
her father's  
head to  
Minos

And in hir comyng onto his presence,  
Hir fadris hed whan she afforn hym laide,  
No-thing a-shamed off hir gret offence,  
Onto Mynos thus she dede abraide, 2552  
And with bold cheer[e] euene thus she saide:  
"Mi lord," quod she, "with support off your grace,  
Yeueth to my tale leiser tyme and space;

and declared  
that her  
love for him  
had

Certis, my lord, loue hath excitid me [p. 33] 2556  
And constreynyd to this cruel deede,  
To slen my fader, destroien my cite,  
Forgete my worshep, forsaken womanheede,  
And maad me hardi to make my fader bleede — 2560  
Thynges horrible thus I haue vndertake  
For tacomplisshe onli for your sake.

constrained  
her to do  
this horrible  
deed.

Mi-silff disheritid for loue off your persone,  
Callid in my contre a fals traitouresse, 2564  
Disconsolat stole a-wey a-lone,  
Off newe diffamed, named a maistresse  
Off fals moordre, I brynge a gret witesse,  
Mi fadres hed and his dedli visage, 2568  
A-geyn nature to forthren your viage.

"Wherefore,  
I pray, consider,  
like a gentle  
knight,

Wherefore, I praie that ye list aduertise,  
And considreth lich a gentil knyht  
How I, for loue toward your gret emprise, 2572  
And to gret fortheryng also off your ryht,  
Haue first my fader depryued off his myht,  
Raft hym his liff, dispoiled his richesse  
To do plesaunce to your hih noblesse. 2576

and accept  
my love.

And no-thing axe onto my guerdoun  
Nor to my reward that myhte me auaille,  
But that I myhte haue ful possessioun

Off your *persone*, most worthi in bataile; 2580  
 For ther is no tresor that myhte countiruaile  
 To my desir, as that ye wolde in deede  
 Goodli accepte me and my maidenheede.

Ye may me saue & spille with a woord, 2584 "I have left  
 Make most glad and most dolerous; all behind  
 I nat requere off you, my souereyn lord, for your  
 But that ye wolde be to me gracious: sake."

For blood and kyn, and my fadres hous 2588  
 Al lefft behynde, yiff ye list aduerte,  
 And vndepartid youe to you myn herte.

Which to your hihnesse auhte inouh suffise,  
 All thyng consided, in your roial estat, 2592  
 Conceyued also in how vnkouth wise  
 For your loue I stonde desolat,  
 Sauff off your mercy fulli disconsolat.  
 Heere is al and sum, your loue I beie to sore, 2596  
 But ye do grace; I can sey you no more."

And whan she hadde hir tale told knelyng, *Minos was*  
 With a maner pretense off wemanheed, *horrified.*  
 Off al hir tresoun a poynt nat concelyng, 2600  
 The kyng astonyd off hir horrible deed,  
 Bi gret auys peised and took heed,  
 It was not sitting to prynce nor to no kyng  
 To do fauour to so froward a thyng. 2604

With troublid herte and with a face pale,  
 His look vpcast, [he] seide, "God forbeede,  
 That euer in cronycle, in story or in tale,  
 That any man sholde off Mynos reede, 2608  
 How he supported so venymous a deede —  
 Fauoure a woman, allas and wellaway!  
 Which slouh hir fader whan he a-bedde lay.

But for your hatful and vnkyndli rage, 2612 "May the  
 I pray the goddis echon and Saturne gods take  
 To take vengeance on your fals outrage: vengeance  
 For euery-wher, wher ye do returne, on you!  
 And eueri place wher-as ye soiourne, 2616

2585. dolorous H.  
 2589. Al] And R.  
 2593. Conceyued] And conceyve H.  
 2603. no] *om.* H.  
 2606. he] *om.* R, J, P, H 5.  
 2608. That] Tat R.

- Lond and se, shortli to expresse,  
Thei been infect with your cursidnesse.
- "Begone from  
my court!" Your owne mouth your outrage doth accuse;  
And your accus is so abhomynable, 2620  
That your giffis I fulli do refuse, —  
Thei be so froward and repreuable.  
And your persone, disnaturel & vnstable,  
Withynne my court, it were a thyng nat fayr, 2624  
That ye sholde a-bide or haue repair.
- "May Tellus  
and Neptune  
refuse you  
an abiding-  
place!" Ye be so hatful vpon eueri side  
And contrarious off condicioun,  
I prairie Tellus, which off the erthe is guide, 2628  
And to Neptunus I make this orisoun:  
As ferr as strecchith ther domynacioun  
Vnder the boundis off ther regalie,  
A duellyng-place that thei to you denyel!" 2632
- Whan Mynos hadde his answer thus deuised,  
On resoun groundid and on equite,  
And Scilla sauh how she was despised, 2636  
Knew no parti, passage nor contre  
To fynde socour whedir she myhte fle,  
But disespeired as a traitouresse,  
Toward the se a-noon she gan hir dresse
- The gods  
turned  
Scylla into  
a quail  
and her  
father into  
a sparrow-  
hawk. That  
was their  
end. Tentre the water pleyntli yiff she myhte, [p. 34] 2640  
For verrai shame hirseluē for to shrowde;  
And whan the goddis theroff hadde a syhte,  
Thei turned hire, as thei that myhte & kowde, 2644  
In-ta quaille for to synge lowde.  
Hir fader Nisus thei dede also transmue  
In ta sperhawk, the quaille to pursue.
- This was the eende off Nisus & off Scille.  
And afftirward off Athenes the toun 2648  
Was yolden vp to stondeñ at the wille  
Off kyng Mynos, withoute condicioun;  
Euery thre yeer bi reuolucioun  
Thei off the cite sholde nat dellaie 2652  
Nyne off ther childre for a tribut paie.

2640. *The second band begins here R.*

2643. that] *om.* R.

2645. transmue] *remewe* R.

2646. sperhawk] *sparow* R, *sparhawke* H.

2647. 2nd off] *om.* R.

2651. thre] *om.* R.

- This was bi Mynos thymposicioun  
 Vpon Athenys; and off verrai dreed  
 Thei obeied, as maad is mencioun,  
 And ther childre yeer bi yeer thei leed  
 Into Crete the Mynotaur to feed,  
 Onto this monstre ordeyned for repast,  
 Which at ther comyng deuoured wer in hast. 2656
- Minos,  
 victorious  
 over the  
 Athenians,  
 compelled  
 them to  
 send 9 chil-  
 dren every  
 3 years to  
 the Minotaur.
- But or that I ferthere do proceede  
 In this mater, I will do my cure  
 To declare, yiff ye list take heede,  
 Off this monstre to telle the engendrure,\* 2664  
 Vnkouth to heere and a-geyn nature;  
 For bi the writyng off Ouidius,  
 This ougli beeste was engendrid thus,
- Methamorphoseos, the maner ye may see:  
 Mynos hadde a bole off gret fairnesse,  
 Whit as mylk; and the queen Pasiphe  
 Loued hym so hote, the story berth witnesse,  
 And Dedalus dede his besynesse 2668  
 [Bi sotil craft, & made his gynys so,  
 That ayenst kynde with hir he had to do,
- The Minotaur  
 was the off-  
 spring of  
 Pasiphae and  
 a white bull.
- And conceyued a beest[e] monstrous,  
 That was departid, halfe bole, half man; 2676  
 And as the poete bi wrytyng techith vs,  
 Off Mynotaurus thus the name began.  
 And Dedalus, not long aftir whan]  
 That this monstre was bi the queen forth  
 brouht, 2680  
 This subtil werkman hath an hous Iwrouht
- Callid Laboryntus,\* dyuers and vnkouth,  
 Ful off wrynkles and off straungenesse,  
 Ougli to knowe which is north or\* south, 2684  
 Or to what part a man sholde hym dresse;  
 Folk were ther blent with furious derknesse,  
 Who that entred, his retourn was in veyn,  
 Withoute a clue for to resorte a-geyn. 2688
- The bull  
 lived in  
 the Labyrinth  
 made by  
 Daedalus,

2654. bi] of H, R 3. 2657. children R.  
 2658. Mynatour R. 2659. this] the R. 2662. will] wold R.  
 2664. telle the engendrure] tellen the engendrure B, H.  
 2670. Posiphee R. 2673-9 are supplied from R, om. in B, H.  
 2676. halfe a bull P. 2677. bi] om. P.  
 2678. Mynotaurus J, Mynotouris H. 2682. Laboryntus B.  
 2684. or] & B.



a place like  
a prison,  
where it  
devoured  
human flesh.

Off Mynotaurus this was the habitacle,  
Lik a prisoun maad for tormentrie,  
For dampnyd folk a peynful tabernacle;  
For all that lay ther in iupartie,  
The monstre muste deuoure hem & defie:  
And speciali was ordeyned this torment  
For all that wern doun from Athenys sent.

2692

Some books,  
however, say  
that Pasiphae  
had a child by

But in this mater summe bookis varie,  
And afferme how queen Pasiphe  
Off kyng Mynos loued a secretarie  
Callid Taurus, in Bochas ye may see;  
And thus the kyng, for al his rialte,  
Deceyued was, for who may any while  
Hymself preserue wher women list begile?

2696

2700

Taurus, a  
secretary, —  
which would  
explain the  
matter of  
the bull.

For bi this Taurus, Bochas berth witnesse,  
Queen Pasiphe hadde a child ful fair,  
Mynos nat knowing bi no liklynnesse  
But that the child was born to been his hair.  
His trust was good, he fill in no dispair;  
For some husbondis, as poetis han compiled,  
Which most assure [hem] rathest been begiled.

2704

2708

Wives are a  
bad lot, but  
we do not  
discard a  
falcon for  
one fault.

Innocentis can nat deeme a-mysse,  
Namli off wyues that be founde trewe;  
Clerkis may write, but doutlès thus it isse,  
Off ther nature thei loue no thynges newe:  
Stedfast off herte, thei chaunge nat her hewe;  
Hawkes best preued, sumwhile a chek can make,  
Yit for o faute the foul is nat forsake.

2712

2716

To return to  
the Athenians,  
they paid  
their tribute;

Off these materes write I will no more.  
But ay the tribut & seruage off the toun  
Procedith forth, thei constreyned wer so sore,  
Lich as ther lott turned up and doun;  
For ther was maad[e] nōn excepcioun  
Off hih nor louh, nothir for sour nor swete,  
But as it fill, thei were sent into Crete.

2720

2695. from Atthenes doun sent R.

2696. bookis] folk R. 2697. Posiphe R.

2704. Posiphe R. 2705. liklynnesse] liknesse R.

2706. that at R.

2709. hem] om. J, R. 2715. sumwhile] sume tyme R —  
can] gan R.

2716. o] a R — fouyl R.

2717. these materes] this mateer R — will I R.

2719. wer constreynyd R. 2721. made was R.



The\* statut was so inli rigerous, 2724  
 Thei took ther sort as it cam a-boute,  
 Til atte laste it fill on Theseus, and Theseus,  
 That he mut gon foorth a-mong the route,  
 Kyng Eges sone, beyng in gret doute 2728  
 Touchyng his liff, which myht nat be socoured,  
 But that he muste with othre be deuoured.

Which Theseus, for his worthynesse, [p. 35] who  
 And off his knyghthod for the gret ences 2732 afterwards  
 Thoruh manly force, & for his hih prowesse married  
 Whilom was callid the seconde Hercules, Hippolyte,  
 Mong Amazones put hymself in pres, queen of the  
 Weddid Ypolita, as bookis specefe, Amazons,  
 The hardi queen [callid] off Femynye. 2736

And afftirward to Thebes he is gon, and helped  
 Halp there the ladies in especiall, the ladies of  
 Which that compleyned vpon the kyng Creon, 2740 Thebes  
 Which hem destourbed, lik ther estat roiall against the  
 To holde and halwe the festis funerall tyranny of  
 Off ther lordis, as queenys & pryncessis, Creon,  
 Off wifli trouthe to shewe ther kyndenessis. 2744

For whan this Duk the maner hadde seyn, was  
 And off Creon the grete iniquite, sent to  
 To the ladies he made delyuere a-geyn Minos,  
 Ther lordis bonys, off routhe & off pite. 2748  
 Yit in his youthe out off his cite  
 He was delyuered, bi statut ful odible,  
 To be deuoured off this beeste horrible.

He goth to prisoun, for al his semlynesse, 2752 whose  
 As the statut felli dede ordeyne; daughters re-  
 But off routhe and off gentillesse, solved to  
 Hym to preserue from that dedli payne, save him  
 Off kyng Mynos the goodli douhtren tweyne, 2756 from the  
 Adriane shoop off a remedie, Minotaur,  
 And faire Phedra, that he shal nat die.

Thoruh ther helpe he hath the monstre slayn, which he slew.  
 That was so dreedful & ougli for to see; 2760 He falsly de-  
 Bi hem he scapid, wheroff he was ful fayn, serted  
 Ariadne for  
 Phædra,

2724. The] Ther B.

2735. Among Amozones he put R. 2736. Ipolito R.

2741. disturblid R. 2748. Ther] The R. 2757. off] om. R.

2758. shal] shuld R. 2760. so] om. R. 2761. wheroff] wherfor R.

and Ariadne  
became the  
wife of  
Bacchus.

Unlike men,  
women are  
constant, un-  
less their  
husbands be-  
have badly  
to them.

Fortune was  
unkind to  
Mynos:

Pasiphae com-  
mitted  
adultery  
(husbands  
should bear  
such things  
in patience),  
his daughters  
ran away,  
the Minotaur  
was killed,  
Theseus es-  
caped, Athens  
was freed from  
its tribute, and  
Theseus for-  
sook Ariadne  
and married  
Phædra.

- Lad hem with hym, toward his contre.  
And bi the weie, deuoid off al pite,  
Adriane he falsli hath forsake 2764  
A-geyn his surance, & Phedra he hath take.  
Amyd the se [he] lefft hir in an ile,  
Toward no parti she knew no declyn;  
She crieth, wepith, allas, the harde while! 2768  
For off hir fate this was the mortal fyn,  
That for pite Bachus, the god off wyn,  
Took hir to wyue, whos crowne of stonys fyne  
Doth now in heuene with the sterris shyne. 2772  
Thus off Theseus ye may beholde and see  
To Adryane the gret onstedfastnesse,  
The grete ontrouthe, the mutabilite,  
The broke assurance and newfangilnesse; 2776  
But celi women keepe ther stedfastnesse  
Ay ondefouled, sauff, sumwhile off ther kynde,  
Thei must hem purueie, whan men be\* founde  
onkynde.  
Off Theseus I can no more now seyn 2780  
In this mater to make off hym memorie,  
But to kyng Mynos I will resorte a-geyn  
To tell how Fortune, ay fals & transitorie,  
In what poyntis diffacid hath his glorie. 2784  
First off echon Bochas doth specefie  
Off Pasiphe the foule aduout[e]rie,  
Which was his wiff, and stood weel in his grace,  
To his plesance she was most souerayne; 2788  
But a cloude off [a] smal trespase  
Made hir lord at hir to disdeyne:  
But he off wisdam bar preuyli his payne,  
For in this cas, this is my sentence, 2792  
Lat prudent husbandis take hem to pacience.  
On\* other thyngis Mynos gan compleyne,  
Hauyng in herte theroff ful gret greuauunce,  
That he so loste his faire douhtren tweyne, 2796
2764. full falsly he hath R. 2765. Ayenste R — assurance R.  
2766. Amyd] In myddis R, J, H 5 — he] om. H.  
2768. She wepith she crieth R. 2772. the] ix. R.  
2776. and] & the R. 2778. Ay] But euere R — sumwhile]  
sum tyme R. 2779. be] been B — founde] om. H.  
2781. In] of H. 2783. ay] euere R. 2786. Posiphe R,  
H 5, Pasipha P. 2789. 2nd a] om. R, H, R 3, P.  
2792. in this] such R. 2793. hem] hede R.  
2794. On] And on B, H — Mynos] om. H — gan] gan also R, J.

And Mynotaurus slay[e]n with myschaunce.  
 Eek onto hym it was a gret penaunce  
 That Theseus was gon at liberte,  
 And from al tribut delyuered his cite.

2800

It greued hym eek in contenance & cheer,  
 That Theseus Adriane forsook,  
 It liked hym nat also the maneer  
 Onto his wiff that he Phedra took;  
 And yit this Phedra, lich as seith my book,  
 Hadde too sonys bi this Theseus,  
 First Demephon & next Anthilocus.

2804

Eek Theseus afftir gan hym drawe  
 Toward Cecile, in steel armyd cleene,  
 With Pirotheus, in armys his felawe,  
 For to rauysshe Proserpyna the queene.  
 But off entent Phedra ful oncleene,  
 Loued hir stepsonne callid Ypolitus.  
 But for he was to hire daungerous,

2808 Theseus then  
 went to Sicily,  
 and Phædra  
 fell in love  
 with her  
 step-son  
 Hippolytus.

2812

And to hir lust froward and contrarie,  
 In his apport nat goodli nor benigne,  
 Off fals entent anon she gan to varie,  
 And a-geyn hym ful felli to maligne,  
 With a pretence off many tokne & signe  
 Off womanhed, she gan hym accuse,  
 Hire auoutry falsli to excuse.

[p. 36]

2816

Who seith that women can nat ymagyne  
 In ther diffence talis ful vntrewe,  
 To ther desir yiff men list nat enclyne  
 Nor on ther feyned fals[e] wo to rewe,  
 Anon thei can compasse[n] thynges newe,  
 Fisshe and fynde out in ther entencioun  
 A couert cloude to shadwe ther tresoun.

2820

2824 When he  
 repulsed her,  
 she turned  
 on him  
 (women are  
 well able to  
 lie in their  
 own interest)

2828

She hath accusid yonge Ypolitus  
 Off fals auoutri in his tendre age,  
 Tolde & affermed to duk Theseus,  
 With ful bold cheer[e] & a pleyn visage,  
 How he purposed in his furious rage

2832 and accused  
 him to  
 Theseus of  
 improper con-  
 duct toward  
 her.

2798, 2801, 2808. Eek] Also R. 2803. nat] nouth R.

2804. he] sche R. 2807. Demophan R.

2816. nor] ne R. 2818. ayens his R. 2819. many a H.

2823. ful] om. R.

2825. Nor] Neithir R — fals feyned R. 2826. compassh R.

2832. a] om. R.

Onli bi force hir beute to oppresse,  
Hir lord besechyng to refourme & redresse

(Women are  
sometimes  
very un-  
truthful;

The grete iniurie doon onto his wiff 2836  
Whil he was absent for thyngis that bar charge.  
Wyues off talis been *sum*while inuentiff  
To suffre ther tinges falsli fleen at large;  
But folk that list off daunger hem discharge, 2840  
Off such accusyng ne take thei noon heed  
Til the trouthe be tried out in deed.

of course I  
don't mean  
good and in-  
nocent ones,  
but there  
are very few  
of that sort.)

I meene nothing off wyues that been goode,  
Nor off women that floure in innocence; 2844  
For God forbeede, and the Hooli Rood,  
But men sholde do deu reuerence  
To ther noblesse and ther excellence,  
Declare ther bounte and ther vertu shewe, 2848  
And more them cherisshe be-cause ther be so fewe.

Hippolytus  
was frightened  
and fled.

Touchyng thaccusyng ageyn Ypolitus,  
Thouh it so were that it was fals in deede,  
Yit he for shame and\* feer off Theseus, 2852  
As in the story ye may beholde and reede,  
In his herte he cauhte a maner dreede,  
That he, allas! this cely yonge knyht,  
Fledde & withdrouh hym out off his fadris siht, 2856

His horses  
ran away  
and he and his  
chariot were  
overwhelmed  
by a landslide;

His indignacioun pleyntli to cshewe,  
Thouh bi desert in hym ther was no lak.  
Off hasti dreed as he gan remewe  
Other in a chaar or vpon hors[e]bak, 2860  
His hors affraied, ther fill a sodeyn wrak  
Doun from a roche pendant, as ye shal lere —  
He and his chaar wer downyd bothe Ifeere.

and Phædra,  
fearing the  
vengeance  
of Theseus,  
slew herself.

Thus ongilti, in his most lusti youthe 2864  
He was conueied to his destruccioun;  
The sclandre conspired, as it is weel kouthe,  
Bi fals[e] Phedra: but in conclusioun  
The sclandre turned to hir confusioun; 2868  
For whan she wiste Ypolitus was ded  
Thoruh hir defaute, anon for shame & dreed

2834. oppresse] presse R. 2835. redresse] dresse R.

2836. iniurie] iniquyte R — onto] to R.

2838. *sum*tyme been R.

2840. folkis R — daunger] damage R.

2850. thaccusyng] this accusyng R.

2851. 2nd it] he R — was] wer H. 2852. and] and for B.

She took a\* sword, ful sharp[e] whet & grounde,  
 And therewithall she rooff hir herte on tweyne. 2872  
 Loo, how that vengauce will euer\* a-geyn rebounde  
 On hem that falsli doon ther bisi peyne  
 To sclandre folk; for lik as thei ordeyne  
 With ther defautis othir folkis tattwite, 2876  
 God atte laste ther malice can acquite!

Such things  
 happen to  
 people who  
 slander others.

Yit summe bookis off Phedra do recorde  
 That she, a-shamyd & confus off this deede,  
 Heeng hirsilff up ful hih[e] with a corde. 2880  
 Loo, how fals sclandre can quite folk ther meede!  
 Wherefore, I counseile eueri man tak heede,  
 In such materis as stonde in noun certeyn,  
 From hasti doomys his tunge to restreyn. 2884

And it would  
 also be well  
 for men not  
 to draw  
 hasty con-  
 clusions, as  
 Theseus seems  
 to have done.

**A** MONG these stories woful for to reede,  
 Al bespreynt with teris in his face,  
 Ful sodenli, Iohn Bochar gan take\* heede,  
 A-myd the pres Zizara cam in place — 2888  
 And how that Fortune gan eek to manace  
 This proude duk, ful myhti & notable,  
 Off kyng Iabyn callid the grete constable.

Sisera,  
 Jabin's  
 general,

Off his hoost ledere and gouernour, 2892  
 To Israel verray mortalt fo;  
 With peple he rood lich a conquerour,  
 And wher that euer his meyne dede go,  
 The erthe quook, peeplis drad hym so, 2896  
 Fledde from his face wher-as he cam a-ferre.  
 Nyne hundred waynes he hadde for the werre,

mortal foe  
 to the Jews,

Strongli enarmed with hookes made lyk\*sithes, [p. 37]  
 Whothat approched to mayme\*hym & towounde. 2900  
 For this tirant off custum offte sithes

2871. a] his B, hir H — sherp I whet & groun R.

2872. rooff] raff R — on tweyne] atweyne R.

2873. that] om. H — euer] ay B, H, R 3, om. P.

2876. defautis] diffamys — to atwyte R.

2877. malice] mateeres H — can] gan R.

2880. ful] wol H. 2881. folk quyte for þer mede R.

2884. hasti] om. H — hasti doomys] his hasty language R.

2887. take] taken B.

2888. A-myd] In middes R — in] to R.

2889. eek] also R. 2896. peple R.

2899. made lyk] & with B, H.

2900. mayme] mayne B, H, H 5 — hym] om. R, J.



Hadde gret delit the Iewes to confounde;  
 And alle tho that his swerd hath founde,  
 Kyng Iabyn bad, the prynce off Canaan,  
 In Israel to spare child nor man. 2904

was suffered  
 by God to  
 chastise their  
 sins.

This Zizara was sent to been ther scourge,  
 Bi Goddis suffrance ther synnes to chastise,  
 Ther olde offences to punshen & to pource, 2908  
 As a flagelle, in many sundry wise;  
 But whan off resoun thei gan hem bet deuyse,  
 And for ther trespacis to falle in repentaunce,  
 God gan withdrawe the hand off his vengauce. 2912

But when  
 they repented,

For in ther myscheef thei gan the \* Lord to knowe,  
 Felyng the prikke off his punycioun;  
 And mercy thanne hath vnbent the bowe  
 Off his fell ire and castigacioun: 2916  
 To God thei made ther inuocacioun,  
 And he hem herde in ther mortal dreede.  
 In Iudicum the story ye may reede,

God sent  
 Deborah in  
 their defence,

How in the while that this Zizara 2920  
 Shoop hym off newe Iewes to oppresse,  
 In ther diffence God sent hem Delbora,  
 A prophetesse, the story berth witnesse,  
 To yeue hem counsail ther harmys to redresse, 2924  
 And bi the sperit off hir prophecye  
 For to withstonde the grete tyrannye

Off Zizara, which was descendid doun  
 With a gret hoost into the feeld repeired. 2928  
 But Delbora, of hih discrecioun,  
 Whan that she sauh the Iewes disespeired,  
 And for to fihthe ther corages sore appeired,  
 She made hem first deuoutli in ther dreed 2932  
 To crie to God to helpe hem in ther need.

who became  
 their leader  
 and judge.

She was ther iuge and ther gouerneresse,  
 Cheeff off ther counsail; & off custom she,  
 Causis dependyng, bi gret avisynesse, 2936  
 That stood in doute, bi doom off equite  
 She tried hem out vnder a palme tre,

2904. the] *om.* R. 2905. nor] *ne* J, R 3, H 5, P.

2910. bet] *better* R. 2911. ther] *the* R.

2912. gan] *can* R. 2913. the] *ther* B, H.

2919. *Marginal note in R:* "Nota Iudicum iiiij Ca°."

2921. the *Iewis* R.

2928. hoost] *coste* R. 2932. ther] *pat* R. 2936. bi] *of* R.



And was nat hasty\* no mater to termyne  
Til she the parties affor dede examyne.

2940

And whan she knew & herde off the komyng  
Off Zizara with ful gret puissaunce,  
That was constable off the myhti kyng  
Callid Iabyn, with al his ordenaunce,  
Vpon Iewes for to doon vengauce,  
This Delbora gan prudentli entende  
The Iewes parti bi wisdom to diffende.

When she  
heard that  
Sisera had  
come with  
his army,

2944

She bad Barach, hir husbonde, anon riht  
Off Neptalym ten thousand with hym take,  
Geyn Zizara to fighen for ther riht,  
And that he sholde a gret enarme make.  
But he for dreed this iourne gan forsake,  
And durste nat a-geyn hym tho werreye  
But she were present, and list hym to conveye.

2948

she bade  
Barak, her  
husband, lead  
a host against  
him. But as  
Barak was  
afraid,

2952

"Weel weel," quod she, "sithe it stondith so,  
That off wantrust ye haue a maner dreed,  
I will my-silff[e] gladli with you go,  
You to supporte in this grete need;  
But tristith fulli, as ye shal fynde in deed,  
That a woman, with laude, honour & glorie,  
Shal fro you wynne the pris off this victorye."

2956

she herself  
took com-  
mand of his  
forces.

2960

It folwid afftir sothli as she saide.  
Aუსili she made hir ordynaunce,  
And the cheeff charge on hirsilff she laide,  
As pryncesse off Iewes gouernaunce,  
And prudentli gan hirsilff auauce,  
With God conueied & support off his grace,  
With Zizara to meetyn in the face.

2964

Sisera fled

2968

And specialli touchyng this viage,  
God took a-way the sperit and the myht  
Fro Zizara, his force and his corage,  
That he was ferfull tentren into fyht,  
Kepte his chaar & took hym onto flyht,  
Knowyng no place seurli in tabide,  
Til that Iahel, a woman, dede hym hide

to the tent  
of a woman  
called Iael,

2972

2939. hasty] hardi B, hardy H.  
2940. afforne H. 2941. herd & knew R.  
2948. Barish H.  
2950. Geyn] Aзens R.  
2956. That] Than H. 2972. feerdful R.  
2973. onto] into R. 2975. Iael R.

who  
drove a nail  
into his  
head while  
he slept.

Withynne hir tente, almost ded for dreed, 2976  
Vnder a mantell desirous for to drynke.  
She gaff hym mylk; the slep fill in his hed,  
And whil that he for heuynesse gan wynke  
And sadli slepte, she gan hir to be-thynke; 2980  
Thouhte she wolde for Zizara so shape,  
That with the liff he shulde nat escape.

Such is the  
fate of  
tyrants!

She took a nail that was sharp & long, [p. 38]  
And couertli gan hirsilff auauunce; 2984  
With an hamer myhti, round & strong  
She droff the nail — loo, this was hir vengauce! —  
Thoruhout his hed: seeth heer þe sodeyn chaunce  
Off tirantis that trusten on Fortune, 2988  
Which wil nat suffre hem longe to contune

Let Sisera be  
an example  
to you. No  
lordship en-  
dures with-  
out virtue.

In ther fals vsurped tirannye  
To holde peeplis in long subieccioun.  
She can hem blandiss\* with hir flat[e]rye 2992  
Vnder a colour off fals collusioun,  
And with a sodeyn transmutacioun  
Fortune hem can, that pore folkis trouble,  
Reuerse ther pride with hir face double. 2996

What sholde I lengere in this mater tarye?  
Thouh that lordshep be myhti & famous,  
Lat Zizara been your exaunplarye,  
It nat endureth but it be vertuuous. 3000  
Conquest, victory, thouh thei be glorious,  
Onto the world, yiff vertu be behynde,  
Men nat reioise to haue ther name in mynde.

For Fortune thoruh hir frowardnesse 3004  
Hath kyngis put out off ther regiouns,  
And she hath also thoruh hir doubilnesse  
Destroied lynages, with ther successiouns:  
Made she nat whilom hir translaciouns 3008  
Off the kyngdam callid Argyuois,  
To be transportid to Lacedemonois?

Sisera's pride  
was humbled,  
when he stood  
at the height  
of his glory.

The same tyme whan Zizara the proude  
Gan Goddis peeples to putte vnder foote,  
Famys trumpe bleuh his name up loude 3012

2986. this was hir] heer H. 2988. Off] On R.  
2992. blandisshe B. 2995. folk R. 2996. hir] the R.  
3008. whilom] sume tyme R. 3010. Lacedemonois R, J.  
3013. Famys] Fame his R.

With sugred sownys semyng wonder soote;  
 But al his pride was rent up bi the roote,  
 Whan that his glori was outward most shewyng; 3016  
 But who may truste on any worldli thyng!

**F**OLK han afforn seyn the fundacioun,  
 Bi remembraunce off old antiquite,  
 Off myhti Troye and\* off Ylioun, 3020  
 Afftir destroyed bi Grekis that cite,  
 To vs declaryng the mutabilite  
 Off fals Fortune, whos fauour last no while,  
 Shewyng ay trewest whan she will begile. 3024

Fortune's  
favour does  
not last  
long.

So variable she is in hir delites,  
 Hir wheel vntrusti & frowardli meuyng,  
 Record I take off the Madianytes,  
 Ther vnwar fall ful doolfully pleynyng,  
 Which shewed hemsilff [ful] pitousli wepyng  
 To Iohn Bochas, as he in writyng souhte  
 How that Fortune a-geyn ther princis wrouhte,

Think of the  
Midianites,  
who came  
weeping to  
Bochas.

Which that gouerned the lond off Madian, 3032  
 Trustyng off pride in ther gret puissaunce;  
 And a-geyn Iewes a werre thei be-gan,  
 Purposyng to brynge hem to vttraunce:  
 But God that holdeth off werre the balaunce, 3036  
 And can off pryncis oppresse the veynglory,  
 Yeueth wher hym list conquest & victory,

They began  
a war on  
the Jews,

Nat to gret noumbre nor to gret multitude,  
 But to that parti where he seeth the riht;  
 His dreedful hand, shortli to conlude, 3040  
 So halt up bi grace and yeueth liht\*  
 The hiere hand, where he caste his siht;  
 List his power and his fauour shewe, 3044  
 Be it to many or be it ontofewe.

but God  
gives victory  
not to num-  
bers but to  
right.

The wrong[e] parti gladli hath a fall,  
 Thouth ther be mylliouns many mo than oon:  
 I take wisse off Ieroboall, 3048

3014. sugred] sacrid R.

3018. fmyacioun J. 3020. and] and eek B.

3024. ay trewest] euer trust R. 3030. writyng] bokys H.

3039. nor] ne R.

3042. halt] holdith H 5 — So haldith vp his grace P — liht]  
 to euery wiht B, H, euery wight P.

3046. in R: nota Ca° vj & Ca° vij Iudicum.

Gideon de-  
feated the  
Midianites  
with 300 men.

Which is also callid Gedeon,  
That with thre hundrid fauht a-geyn the foon  
Off Israell, the Bible can deuyse,  
Whan he to God hadde doon his sacrefise. 3052

Shewyng to hym a signe merueilous,  
Whan the flees with siluer deuh ful sheene  
Was spreynt and wet, the story tellith thus,  
And round a-boute the soil and al the greene 3056  
Was founde drie, and no drope seene,  
In tokne onli, this duk, this knyhtli man,  
Shold ha[ue] victory off al Madian.

Although he  
was weak in  
numbers,

Thus Gedeon took with hym but a fewe, 3060  
Thre hundred chose, which laped\* the ryuer,  
God onto hym such toknys dede shewe  
And euydencis afforn that wer ful cleer,  
That he sholde been off riht good cheer 3064  
And on no parti his aduersaries dreede,  
For no\* prowesse nouthir\* [for] manheede.

God gave  
him victory.

Where God a-boue holdith\* chaumpartie, [p. 39]  
There may a-geyn hym be makid no diffence; 3068  
Force, strengthe, wisdom nor cheualrie  
A-geyns his myht ar feeble off resistance.  
This was weel preued in experience,  
Whan thre hundred with Gedeon in noumbre 3072  
So many thousandis bi grace dede encoumbre.

They ter-  
rified their  
enemies by  
blowing their  
trumpets,  
breaking  
empty pots  
and suddenly  
shewing the  
light of their  
lamps.

This said[e] peeple, deuyded into thre,  
With ther trumpis, vpon the dirk[e] nyht,  
Bi Gedeon, that hadde the souereynte, 3076  
With void[e] pottis & laumpis therynne lyht;  
And thus arraied thei entred into fyht.  
But onto hem this tokne was first knowe:  
Whan Gedeon his trumpe dede blowe, 3080  
Thei bleuh echon & loude gan to crie,  
Brak ther pottis and shewed anon riht,  
As the story pleynli doth specefie,

3050. thre] iij B.

3061. laped] scaped B, P, H 5, scapid H, J, scapide R 3 —  
which] with R. 3064.] om. R.

3066. For no] ne for noo R 3, — no] nouht B, nouzt J, nought  
H 5 — nouthir] nor B, neithir R, neipzr J, neyther P.

3067. holdith] halt B, H. 3069. nor] nethir R.

3070. ar] or R. 3075. trumpis] triumphis R.

3083. doth pleynly R.

Ther laumpis shewed with a ful sodeyn liht,  
Wheroff ther enmyes, astonyd in ther siht,  
Were so troublid vpon euery side,  
That in the feeld thei durst[e] nat a-bide.

3084 Whereupon the  
Midianites  
fied.

The cri was this off hem euerichon:  
"Thank to the Lord most noble & glorious,  
Pris to the suerd off myhti Gedeon,  
Which vs hath causid to be victorious,  
Maad our enmyes, most malicious,  
Thoruh influence onli off his grace,  
For verray feer to fleen afforn our face!"

3088

Thus can the Lord off his magnyficence  
The meeke exalte & the proude oppresse,  
Lich as he fyndeth in hertis difference,  
So off his power he can his domys dresse,  
Merçi ay meynt with his rihtwisnesse,  
His iugementis with long delay differrid;  
And or he punshe, pite is ay preferrid.

3092

Thus the  
Lord can  
exalt the  
meek and  
humble the  
proud.

3100

### ¶ Lenvoys.

**M**IHTI Princis, remembre that your power  
Is transitory & no while a-bidyng,  
As this tragedie hath rehersed heer  
Bi euidentis ful notable in shewyng,  
And bexamples, in substaunce witnessyng,  
That all tirantis, platli to termyne,  
Mut from ther staat sodenli declyne.

3104

Princes, re-  
member, your  
power is not  
lasting.

Phebus is freshest in his mydday speer,  
His bemys brihdest & hattest out spredyng;  
But cloudi skies ful offte approche neer  
Teclipse his liht with ther vnwar comyng:  
Noon ertheli ioie is longe heer abidyng,  
Record off Titan, which stound[e]meel doth shyne,  
Yit toward nyht his stremys doun declyne.

3108

Phoebus is  
brightest at  
midday, but  
his light is  
often dimmed  
by clouds.

3112

Whan that Fortune is fairest off hir cheer  
Bi apparence, and most blandisshyng,  
Thanne is [she] falsest ech sesoun off the yeer,  
Hir sodeyn chaungis now vp now doun turnyng;  
The nyhtyngale in May doth fresshli syng,

3116

When  
Fortune seems  
fairest, then  
is she most  
ready to  
change.

3120

3089. Thank] than H.

3109. Phebus is freshest] Phebus shen freish R.

3110. out spredyng] out shewyng R. 3119. chaunge R.

Remember  
the un-  
certainty of  
all earthly  
happiness.

But a bakwynter can somer vndermyne  
And al his fresshnesse sodenli declyne.

Al ertheli blisse dependith in a weer,  
In a ballaunce oneuenli hangyng, — 3124  
O Pryncis, Pryncessis most souereyn & enteer,  
In this tragedie conceyueth be redyng,  
How that estatys bi ful vnwar chaungyng,  
Whilom ful worthi, ther lyues dede fyne, 3128  
Whan fro ther noblesse thei wer maad to declyne.

[Of mighty Iabyn Kyng of Canane, of quene Iocasta/  
and how Thebes was destroyed.]<sup>1</sup>

Now I will  
write about  
the fall of  
Jabin, rebel  
to God,

**N**OW must I write the grete sodeyn fall  
Off myhti Iabyn for his inquite, 3132  
Which onto Iewes was enmy ful mortall,  
With sceptre & crowne regnyng in Canane,  
And vpon Affrik hadde the souereynte,  
Rebel to God, and list hym nat obeye,  
But euer redi his peeple to werreye. 3136

who long  
forbore to  
punish him,

The Lord a-boue, seyng the tyrannye,  
Forbar his hand with ful long suffraunce,  
And was nat hasti on his obstynacye,  
Lich his desert, for to do vengauce; 3140  
But ay this Iabyn bi contynuaunce  
Endured foorth in his cursidnesse,  
Til that the suerd off Goddis rihtwisnesse

but finally  
threw him  
down in the  
midst of his  
pride.

Was whet ageyn hym, this tirant to chastise. 3144  
And to represe his rebelloun,  
From his kyngdam, the story doth deuise,  
Mid off his pride he was pullid down,  
Texemplefie wher domynacioun 3148  
Is founde wilfull trouthe to ouercaste,\*  
God wil nat suffre ther power longe laste.

For this Iabyn, founde alway froward, [p. 40]  
Off hih disdeyn list nat the Lord to knowe, 3152  
Therefore his power drouh alwey bakward,

3121. abak wynter H 5, aback winter P.

3127. ful] *om.* R. 3128. Whilom] *Sumtyme* R.

3133. Chanane R. 3136. redi] *redy* is R. 3137. the] *this* R.

3141. ay] *euer* R. 3147. Mid] *In myddis* R.

3148. wher] *the* R.

3149. to ouercaste] *touercaste* B.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 17 recto.



And his empire was I-brouht ful lowe;  
 His roial fame Fortune hath ouerthrowe,  
 His name eclipsid, that whilom shon so cleer 3156  
 Off grete Cison beside the ryueer.

OFF queen Iocasta Bochas doth eek endite,  
 Pryncesse off Thebes, a myhti gret cite,  
 Off hir vnhappis he doolfulli doth write, 3160  
 Ymagynyng how he dede hir see  
 To hym appeere in gret aduersite,  
 Lich a woman that wolde in teres reyne,  
 For that Fortune gan at hir so disdeyne. 3164

Bochas also  
 tells the story  
 of Queen  
 Jocasta,

Thouh she were diffacid off figure,  
 Ther shewed in hir a maner maieste  
 Off queenli honour, pleynli to discure  
 Hir infortunys and hir infelicite, 3168  
 And to declare pleynli how that she  
 Off all princessis which euer stood in staat,  
 She was hirselff the moste infortunat.

who appeared  
 before him  
 proudly declar-  
 ing her misfor-  
 tunes.

Which gaff to Bochas ful gret occasioun, 3172  
 Whan he sauh hir pitous apparaile,  
 For to make a lamentacioun  
 Off vnkouth sorwe which dede hir assaile,  
 With a tragedie to wepyn and bewaile 3176  
 Hir inportable & straunge dedli striff,  
 Which that she hadde duryng al hir liff.

He wrot off hir a story large & pleyn,  
 And off hir birthe first he doth diffyne, 3180  
 And affermeth in his book certeyn,  
 She was descendid off a noble lyne;  
 In flouryng age eek whan she dede shyne,  
 She weddid was, for hir gret beute, 3184  
 Onto the kyng off Thebes the cite,

She came of a  
 noble line and  
 married Laius,  
 king of Thebes,

Which in his tyme was callid Layus.  
 And whan hir wombe bi processe gan arise,  
 The kyng was glad and also desirous 3188

3154.] And his empire was afir þat brouht ful lowe R.  
 3156. whilom] some R. 3157. Cisoun J.  
 3158. eek] also R. 3168. hir felicittee R.  
 3170. stoden in estate R. 3171. the] om. R.  
 3173. sauh] seeth R. 3175. sorowis R.  
 3176. bewaile] to waile R.  
 3179. wrot] writ R, H, P, write H 5, writte J — a] om. R.  
 3183. eek] also R — she] þat she R. 3187. arise] to rise H.

The childes fate to knowe[n] in sum wise,  
 And thouhte he wolde go do sacrefise  
 Onto Appollo, to haue\* knowyng aforn\*  
 Touchyng this child whan that it were born. 3192

who, when she  
 became  
 pregnant,  
 asked Appollo  
 what would be  
 the destiny  
 of the child.

What sholde folwen in conclusioun,  
 He was desirous and hasti for to see,  
 First bi the heuenli disposicioun,  
 And bi the fauour, yiff it wolde be, 3196  
 Off Appollos myhti deite  
 To haue answere, a-mong his rihtis all,  
 Off his child what fate ther sholde fall.

Appollo said it  
 was fated to  
 kill its father.

His answere, thouh it were contrarie 3200  
 To his desir, yit was it thus\* in deede:  
 Appollo told hym, & list no lenger tarie,  
 That this child sholde verraili in deede  
 Slen his fader, & make his sides bleede, 3204  
 And with his handis; ther was noon othir weie,  
 But on his swerd he muste needis deie.

When his son  
 was born, the  
 king bade men  
 put him to  
 death in a  
 forest.

The kyng was heuy and trist off this sentence,  
 Sorful in herte, God wot, and no thyng fayn, 3208  
 And caste afforn thoruh his prouidence,  
 That his sone in al haste sholde be slayn,  
 And that he wolde nat oon hour delayn  
 Afftir his berthe, but bad his men to goon 3212  
 Into a forest and sle the child a-noon.

Lik his bidding the mynystres wrouhte in<sup>e</sup> deede,  
 Takyng the child, tendre and yong off age;  
 And in-tafforest with hem thei gan it leede, 3216  
 To be deuoured off beestis most sauage:  
 The mooder, allas, fill almost in a rage,  
 Seyng hir child, so inli fair off face,  
 Shal thus be ded, and dede no trespace. 3220

His mother al-  
 most went mad  
 for grief,

Litil wonder thouh she felte smerte!  
 To all women I reporte me,  
 And onto moodres that be tendre off herte,

3189. fate] state R, staat J. 3191. to haue] ta B —  
 knowlychyng afforn R — aforn] befor H, tofforn B.  
 3192. were] was R. 3193. What] That R.  
 3196. yiff] om. R. 3198. rihtis] wittis R.  
 3199. ther sholde fall] schuld befall R.  
 3201. thus] this B. 3205. noon othir] nober R.  
 3208. sorowfull H — in] off R. 3209. thoruh] om. R.  
 3211. delayn] delay R. 3215. yong & tendre H.  
 3216. into a forest R — it] hym R. 3218. almost fill into R.

In this mater iuges for to be.

Was it nat routhe, was it nat pite,

That a pryncesse and a queen, allas,

Sholde knowyn hir child deuoured in such cas!

3224 which was not  
astonishing  
in the  
circumstances.

Afftir his berthe Layus took good keep,

Withoute mercy, respit or delay,

That onto oon, which that kepte his sheep,

This yonge child vpon a certeyn day

Shal be delyuered in al the haste he may,

To this entent, it myht nat be socourid,

But that he sholde off beestis be deuourid.

3228

3232

This seid[e] shepperde goth foorth a-noon riht, [p.41]

The child beholdyng, benygne off look & face,

Thouhte in his herte & in his inward siht,

He sholde doon to God a gret trespace

To slen this child; wherfore he dede hym grace, —

Took first a knyff, & dede his besi peyne

Thoruhout his feet to make holis tweyne.

3236 But the shep-  
herd who was  
commanded  
to slay the  
child had  
compassion,  
and, piercing  
his feet, hung  
him up in a  
tree,

3240

Took a smal\* rod off a yong\* oseer,

Perced the feet, allas, it was pite! —

Bond hym faste, and bi good leiseer

The yonge child he heeng vpon a tre,

Off entent that he ne sholde be

Thoruh wilde beestis, cruel & sauage,

Been sodenli deuoured in ther rage.

3244

3248

Vpon the tre whil he heeng thus bounde,

Off auenture bi sum occasioun,

A straunge shepperde hath the child I-founde,

Which that off routhe & pite\* took hym down,

Bar it with hym hoom onto his toun,

Made his wiff for to doon hir peyne

To fostre the child with hir brestis tweyne.

where he was  
found by an-  
other shep-  
herd, who  
cared for him,

3252

And whan he was brouht forth & recurid,

And ful maad hool off his woundis sore,

The yonge child, which al this hath endurid,

When he in age gan to wexe more,

And that nature gan hym to restore,

The said[e] shepperde, that loued hym best off all,

Afftir his hurtis Edippus dede hym call.

3256

3260 and called him  
Oedipus,

3230. which] *om.* R. 3241. feet] *hert* R.

3242. *smal and yong are transposed in B — osier R, P, H 5.*

3252. *pite & routhe B, P. 3253. onto] in to R.*

3258. *The] This R. 3259. began R.*

For Edippus is no more to seyne,  
 Who that conceyueth the xpositioun,  
 But feet Ipershid throuhout bothe tweyne, 3264  
 In that language, as maad is menciouñ.  
 And to Meropa, wyff off kyng Poliboun,  
 The shepperde, off ful humble entente, 3268  
 Gan the child ful lowli to presente.

and presented  
 him to Queen  
 Merope, wife  
 of Polybus.

And for she was bareyn off nature,  
 She and the kyng off oon affeccioun  
 Took Edippus bothe into ther cure, 3272  
 As sone and heir bi adopcioun,  
 To regne in Corynthe bi successioun;  
 The kyng, the queen off Corynthe the contre  
 Haddyn the child in so gret cheerte. 3276

Thus Edipus  
 became the  
 adopted son  
 and heir of the  
 king of  
 Corinth.

Let men considre in ther discrecioun  
 Sodeyn chaung off euery maner thyng:  
 This child sent out for his destruccioun,  
 And now prouydid for to been a kyng; 3280  
 And thoruh Fortune, ay double in hir werkyng,  
 He that was refus to beestis most sauage,  
 Is now receyued to kyngli heritage.

How sudden  
 are the  
 changes of  
 Fortune!

Destitut he was off his kenreede, 3284  
 Forsake and abiect off blood & off allie,  
 In tendre youthe his feet wer'maad to bleede,  
 Heeng on a tre and gan for helpe crie;  
 But God that can in myscheeff magnefie 3288  
 And reconforte folk disconsolat,  
 Hath maad this child now so fortunat,

And prouyded to been a kyngis heir,  
 Off hym that stood off deth in auenture. 3292  
 Fortune can shewe hir-selff bothe foul & fair,  
 Folkis brouht lowe ful weel a-geyn recure;  
 And such as can pacientli endure,  
 And list nat gruchch a-geyn ther chastisyng, 3296  
 God out off myscheeff can sodenli hem bryng.

People who  
 are brought  
 low should not  
 complain.  
 God can as  
 quickly raise  
 them up  
 again.

But whan Edippus was growe vp to good age,  
 Lich a yong prynce encresyng in noblesse,  
 Lusti and strong, and fresh off his corage, 3300

3269. Be gan R, J.

3286. youthe] yough R.

3287. on] vp on R — bigan for to crie R — helpe] to H.

3295. such as can] sich (siche) as paiently can R, J.

3299. encresshying R.

Off auenture it fill so in sothnesse,  
 Other be striff or be sum frowardnesse,  
 Or be sum kontek, he hadde knowlechyng  
 How he was nat sone onto the kyng

3304

Edipus soon  
 learned that he  
 was not the  
 real son of  
 King Polybus,

As be discent, but a ferr foreyn.  
 Wherupon ful sore he gan to muse,  
 And for to knowe and be put in certeyn,  
 Thouhte he wolde sum maner practik vse;  
 And to the kyng he gan hymselff excuse,  
 For a tyme withdrawyn his presence,  
 Til that he knew bi sum experience

3308

Or bi sum signe how the mateer stood.  
 Thouhte he wolde doon his dilligence  
 To knowe his fader, and also off what blood  
 He was descendid, and haue sum euidence  
 Touchyng trouthe, how it stood in sentence.  
 And heerupon to be certefied,  
 Toward Appollo faste he hath hym hied,

3312

and consulting  
 the oracle of  
 Apollo,

Which in Cirra worsheped was that tyme,  
 And yaff answeris thoruh his deite  
 To folk that cam, at euen and at pryme,  
 Off eueri doute and ambiguite.

[p. 42]

3320

And there Edippus, fallyng on his kne,  
 Afftir his offryng haddē answerē anoon,  
 Toward Greece that he sholde goon

3324

Onto a mownteyn that Phocis bar the name;  
 And there he sholde off his kenrede heere.  
 Eek lik his fate the answerē was the same:  
 He sholde slen his owne fader deere,  
 And afftir that to Thebes drawe hym neere,  
 Wedde his mooder, off verray ignoraunce,  
 Callid Iocasta, thoruh his vnhappi chaunce.

3328

was told that  
 he would hear  
 of his kindred  
 if he went to  
 Mt. Phocis,

He list no lengere tarien nor abide,  
 This said Edippus, but foorth in haste goth he,  
 And on his weye he gan [anon] to ride,  
 Til he the mownteyn off Phocis dede see,  
 Vnder the which stood a gret contre

3332

which he did,

3336

3304. How] *om.* H.

3306. bigan R. 3308. practik] practiff R. 3309. began R.

3320. answerē R. 3325. that] *om.* R. 3326. Onto] In to R.

3328. Eek] Also R. 3333. nor] ner R.

3335. he gan anon] gan H, R 3, he began anoon J, he biganne  
 anon H 5, he gan anone P, began anone R.

Callid Citoiens, which that tyme in certeyn  
Werreied hem that were on the mounteyn.

and there by  
chance killed  
his father,  
Laius,

His fader Layus, throuh his cheualrie,  
With Citoiens is entrid in bataile;  
And Edippus cam with the partie  
Off the hillis, armed in plate & maile.  
And as thei gan ech other to assaile,  
Among the pres at ther encount[er]yng,  
Off auenture Edippus slouh the kyng.

3340

3344

without knowing  
him.

Onknowe to hym that he his fader was,  
Hauyng theroff no suspicioun;  
Passid his way, platli this the cas,  
And eek onknowe he cam onto the toun  
Off myhti Thebes, where for his hih renoun  
He was receyued with ful gret reuerence,  
Because that he slouh in ther diffence

3348

3352

At Thebes he  
was received  
with great  
honour because  
he slew the  
Sphinx, a ser-  
pent that pro-  
pounded a rid-  
dle to be solved  
on pain of  
death.

Spynx the serpent, horrible for to see,  
Whilom ordeyned bi incantaciouns  
For to destroie the toun and the contre  
Bi his compassid sleiht questionys.  
Slouh man and child in all the regiouns,  
Such as nat koude bi wisdam or resoun  
Make off his problem pleyn exposicioun.

3356

3360

Who passid bi, he koude hym nat excuse,  
But the serpent hym felly wolde assaile,  
With a problem make hym for to muse,  
Callid off summe an vnkouth dyuynaile,  
Which for texpowne, who that dede faile,  
Ther was noon helpe nor other remedie,  
Bi the statut but that he muste deie.

3364

Since all people  
do not know  
this riddle, I  
will tell it to  
you.

And for alle folk ha[ue] nat knowlechyng  
Off this demaunde what it was in deede,  
I will reherse it heer in my wrytyng  
Compendiousli, that men may it reede.  
First this serpent, who that list take heede,  
Was monstrous & spak a-geyn nature,  
And yiff it fill that any creature,

3368

3372

3338. in] om. R. 3343. hil R. 3344. began R.  
3347. Onknowe] Vnknown R. 3349. this is R, J, H 5.  
3350. eek] also R — onto] to R. 3356. destrie R.  
3362. wolde hym felly R. 3364. summe an] sum men R.  
3366. nor] nethir R. 3373. ayenst R.



Man or woman sholde forbi pace,  
 Hih or low, off al that regioun, 3376  
 As I seide erst, ther was noon othir grace,  
 But yiff he made an exposicioun  
 Off this serpentis froward questioun,  
 He muste deie and make no diffence. 3380  
 Which demaunde was this in sentence:

The serpent askid, what thyng may that be,  
 Beeste or foul, whan it is foorth brouht,  
 That hath no power to stonde, go nor fle; 3384  
 And aftirward, yiff it be weel souht,  
 Gotth first on foure, & ellis goth he nouht:  
 Aftir bi processe, on thre, & thanne on tweyne;  
 And efft ageyn, as nature doth ordeyne, 3388

What creature  
 is it that cannot  
 stand when  
 born, and goes  
 first on four,  
 then on three,  
 and finally on  
 two, and after-  
 wards on three  
 and four again?

He goth on thre and efft on foure ageyn,  
 Off kyndly riht nature disposith it so.  
 And in a while it folwith in certeyn,  
 To the mateer which that he cam fro, 3392  
 He muste off keende resorte ageyn therto.  
 And who cannat the menyng cleerli see,  
 He off this serpent shal deuoured be.

Which Edippus, ful so[b]re in his entent, 3396  
 Nat to rakell nor hasti off language,  
 But in his herte with gret ausement,  
 And ful demur off look & [of] visage,  
 Considred\* ferst this pereilous fell passage, 3400  
 Sauh weel tofor\* that it was no iape,  
 And ful prouyded that no woord escape,

Edipus  
 answered  
 with great dis-  
 cretion,

At good leiser with hool mynde & memory, [p. 43]  
 Seyng the earnest off this mortal emprise, 3404  
 His liff dependyng a-twen deth and victory,  
 "This beeste," quod he, "pleynli to deuise,  
 Is first a child, which may nat suffise,  
 Whan it is born, the trouthe is alday seene, 3408  
 Withouten helpe hymselfen to susteene.

"This animal  
 is a child,

3375. forbi] furth bi R.

3377. erst] arst R.

3386. &] or R — he] it R.

3389. efft] aftir R.

3390. Off] Also R — riht] rith R.

3397. nor] orto R.

3400. Considred] Considreth B, R 3.

3401. Sauh] Seeth R, size J — tofor] befor B, R 3.

3405. bitwene R.

who grows to  
be a man.

Afftir on foure he naturali doth kрееe,  
For inpotence and greene tendirnesse,  
Norices can telle that\* doon hem keepe. 3412

But afftirward, vp he doth hym dresse  
With his too feet; the thridde to expresse,  
Is hand or bench or support off sum wall  
To holde hym vp, list he cachche a fall. 3416

When age  
comes he uses  
a staff

And afftirward encresyng off his myht,  
To gretter age whan he doth atteyne,  
Off his nature thanne he goth vpriht,  
Mihlti vpon his leggis tweyne. 3420

Thanne kometh age his power to restreyne,  
Crokid and lame, lik as men may see,  
With staff or potent to make up leggis thre.

and finally re-  
turns with four  
feet to the  
earth from  
which he  
came."

But whan feeblesse or siknesse doon assaile,  
On feet and handis he must bowe & loute;  
For crossid potentis may nat thanne auaille,  
Whan lusti age is bashed & shet oute. 3424

Thanne efft ageyn, heeroff may be no doute,  
With foure feet terthe he doth retourne  
Fro whens he cam, ther stille to soiourne." 3428

Al cam from erthe, and [al] to erthe shall;  
Ageyn nature is no proteccioun; 3432

There is no  
defence against  
nature. Who  
climbs highest  
has the lowest  
fall.

Worldli estat is echon thei be mortall,  
Ther may no tresor make redempcioun.  
Who clymbeth hiest, his fal is lowest doun;  
A mene estat is best, who koude it knowe, 3436  
Tween hih presumyng & bowyng doun to lowe.

For who sit hiest, stant in iupartie,  
Vndir daunger off Fortune lik to fall:  
Myscheeff and pouert as for ther partie, 3440

Be lowest brouht among these peeplis all.  
Summe folk han sugir, summe taste gall;  
Salamon therfore, merour off sapience,  
Tween gret richesse and atween indigence 3444

3412. that] which that B. 3418. gretter] gret R.  
3420. Mihlti] Mihltly R. 3423. a staff R.  
3424. feblenesse R. 3425. hondis & feet R.  
3426. crossid] crossis R, J. 3429. foure] faire R.  
3431. 2nd al] om. H. 3432. is] may be R, J.  
3435. lowest] ferthest H, farthest R 3, fardest P — his] is R.  
3437. Tween] Berwene R. 3438. For] Or R.  
3439. of Fortune is repeated in R. 3442. folkes R.  
3443. therfore] ther of H. 3444. Tween] Bitwene R —  
richesse] richessis R — atween] bitwene R.

Axed a mene callid suffisaunce,  
 To holde hym content off competent dispenche,  
 Nat to reioishe off to gret habundaunce,  
 And ay in pouert to sende hym pacience,  
 Sobre with his plente, in scarsete noon offence  
 As off gruchchyng, but atwen ioie and smert  
 Thanke God off all, and euer be glad off hert.

Therefore, as  
 Solomon said,  
 it is best to be  
 neither too  
 poor nor too  
 rich,

3448

Erthe is the eende off eueri maner man;  
 For the riche with gret possessioun  
 Deieth as soone, as I reherse can,  
 As doth the poore in tribulacioun:  
 For deth ne maketh no dyuisioun  
 Bî synguler fauour, but twen bothe iliche,  
 Off the porest and hym that is most riche.

3452 for the end of  
 all is earth,  
 and Death  
 shews favour  
 to no man.

3456

This seid problem concludith in this cas,  
 Which the serpent gan sleihtili purpose,  
 That whan a child is first born, allas,  
 Kynde to his dethward anon doth hym dispoise;  
 Ech day a iourne; ther is noon other glose;  
 Experience can teche in eueri age,  
 How this world heer is but a pilgrymage.

3460 The moment a  
 child is born he  
 sets forth on a  
 pilgrimage to-  
 wards death.

3464

This said Edippus, first in Thebes born,  
 Sent to a forest deuoured for to be,  
 Founde & brouht foorth, as ye han herd tofor, 3468  
 And afftir\*, drawyng hom to his contre,  
 Slouh his fader, so infortunat was he  
 Off froward happis folwyng al his lyue,  
 As this tragedie his fortune shal descryue.

Ædipus was  
 unfortunate  
 during all his  
 life.

3472

But for that he thoruh his hih prudence  
 Onto the serpent declared euerideel,  
 He slouh hym afftir be myhti violence,  
 Mor bi wisdom than armure maad off steel, — 3476  
 Stace off Thebes can telle you ful weel, —

After he slew  
 the Sphinx,

3446. dispenche] expence R.

3449. scarsete] scarsnesse R, J, scarceenes P, scarsenes H 5 —  
 in] om. H 5.

3450. but atwen] both betwene R.

3457. twen] betwene R. 3458. and] & off R.

3459. concludid R.

3460. began R — sleihtili] sleihty to R. 3463. glose] chose R.

3464. can] gan R. 3466. said] om. H.

3469. afftir] afftirward B, H, R 3.

3472. shal] doth H, can R 3. 3475. myhti] knyhtly R.

3476. than armure, etc.] than of armure & of steele R.

Which was o cause, yiff ye list to seen,  
Wherthoruh Edippus weddid hath the queen

he took his  
mother, Jocasta,  
to wife.

Callid Iocasta, pryncesse off that cite, 3480

His owne mooder, onknowe to hem bothe.

And thouh she were riht fair vpon to see,  
With this mariage the goddis were ful wrothe;

For ther alliaunce nature gan to lothe, 3484

That a mooder, as ye shal vndirstonde,  
Sholde take hir sone to been hir husbonde.

Some evil influ-  
ence of the stars  
must have been  
the cause of  
this unnatural  
marriage.

There was theryn no conveyence, [p. 44]

To be supportid be kynde nor be resoun, 3488

But yiff so be the heuenli influence

Disposid it be thyclynacioun

Off sum fals froward constellacioun,

Causid bi Saturne, or Mars the froward sterre, 3492

Tengendre debat or sum mortal werre.

In this mateer, pleyn[li] thus I deeme

Off no cunzyng but off opynyoun:

Thouh he wer crownyd with sceptre & diademe 3496

To regne in Thebes the stronge myhti toun,

That sum aspect cam from heuene doun,

Infortunat, froward and ful off rage,

Which ageyn kynde deyned this mariage. 3500

Two sons were  
born to them,  
Eteocles and  
Polynices, and  
two daughters,  
Antigone and  
Ismene.

He crownyd was bassent off al the toun,

Flouryng a seson be souereynte off pes;

And whil he heeld[e] theer possessioun,

Sones & douhtres he hadde dout[e]les: 3504

The firste sone callid Ethiocles,

Pollynyces callid was the tothir,

As seith Bochas, the seconde brothir.

Also he hadde goodli douhtren tweyne, 3508

The eldest callid was Antigone,

And the seconde named was Ymeyne;

Bothe thei wern riht fair vpon to see:

The queen Iocasta myhte no gladdere be, 3512

3481. vnknawen R. 3483. this] his H.

3487. no] none R. 3488. nor] no R.

3489. so] it so R — the] that R. 3490. Dispose R.

3494. pleyn R. 3500. deyned] denyed H 5, disposid P.

3503. theer] the R.

3506. Pollicynes R, Polymyces H — was callid H.

3510. And] om. R.

3511. Bothe] And both R — riht fair] om. R — vpon] on R.

Than to remembre, whan thei wex in age,  
How goddis hadde encreced her lynage.

It was hir ioie and hir felicitye  
To seen hir childre, that were so inli faire: 3516  
But ofte in ioie ther cometh aduersite,  
And hope onsured whan hope doth ofte appaire;  
Contrarious trust will gladli ther repaire  
Wher fals[e] wenyng in hertis is conceyued 3520  
Thoruh ignoraunce, which fele folk\* hath deceyued.

Jocasta  
rejoiced  
in her  
children;

What thyng in erthe is more deceyuable,  
Than whan a man supposith verraily  
In prosperite for to stonde stable, 3524  
And from his ioie is remeued sodenly?  
For wher Fortune is founde to hasty  
To trise folk, is greuous to endure,  
For sodeyn chaungis been hatful to nature. 3528

but what  
thing is more  
deceitful  
than  
Fortune?

Vnwar wo that cometh on gladnesse,  
Is onto hertis riht passyng encombrous;  
And who hath felt his part off welfulnesse,  
Sorwe suyng oon is to hym odious. 3532  
And werst off all and most contrarious,  
Is whan estatis, hiest off renoun,  
Been from ther noblesse sodenli put down.

The greatest  
sorrow is  
that which  
comes  
unawares  
after joy.

There is no glory which that shyneth heer, 3536  
That fals Fortune can so magnifie;  
But whan his laude brihtest is and cleer,  
She can eclipse it with sum cloudy skie  
Off vnwar sorwe, onli off envie. 3540  
Seeth off Edippus an open euydence,  
Which bi his lyue hadde experience

There is  
no glory  
that Fortune  
cannot eclipse.

Off hih noblesse, and therwith also  
Part inportable off gret aduersite. 3544  
Is ioie ay meynt with ful mortal wo:  
For whil he regned in Thebes his cite,

3514. How] Heer R.

3516. children R.

3518. whan hope, *separated into two words in J, R 3, P; whan in whan hope is corrected to wan, R, whanne H 5 — doth] om. J.*

3519. will] wol H. 3520. hert R. 3521. folk fele B.

3527. trise] tryuse H. 3531. wilfulnesse R.

3535. put] brouht R. 3542. Which] Whilk H.

3545. ay] euer R. 3546. his] the R.

The land was  
visited by a  
pestilence,

And Iocasta, with ful gret royalte,  
Withynne the contre ther fill a pestilence, 3548  
The people infectyng with his violence

Thoruh al the land and al the regioun  
In eueri age; but most greuouoli  
On hem echon that were[n] off the toun 3552  
Thenfeccioun spradde most speciali.  
And off vengauunce the suerd most rigerousli  
Day be day [be]gan to bite and kerue,  
Off ech estat causyng folk to sterue. 3556

which brought  
the people in  
despair.

Thus gan encrece the mortalite,  
That eueri man stood in iupartie  
Off ther lyues thoruhout the contre,  
So inportable was ther maladie. 3560  
Men myhte heer the peeple clepe & crie,  
Disespeired so were thei off ther lyues.  
Void off al socour and off preseruatyues,

They asked the  
gods and their  
diviners why  
they were so  
punished.

Thei souhte out herbes & spices in ther coffres, 3564  
And gan to seeke for helpe and for socours,  
The cause enqueryng off prudent philisophres  
And off ther moste expert dyuynours, —  
Whi that the goddis with so sharpe shours 3568  
Off pestilence, and in so cruel wise,  
List hem, allas, so mortali chastise?

None could  
answer save  
Tiresias,

But among alle, in soth this is\* the cas, [p. 45]  
Ther was founde oon ful prudent and riht wis, 3572  
A prophete callid Tiresias,  
Off prophesie hauyng a souereyn pris,  
Which that affermed and seide in his auys, —  
As onto hym was shewid be myracle, 3576  
Phebus hymselff declaryng the oracle, —

who told them  
that the pesti-  
lence would in-  
crease until a  
king, who slew  
his father, and  
married his  
own mother,  
should be de-  
posed.

Cause off this siknesse and these maladies,  
As the goddis pleyntli han disposid,  
And Senek writ eek in his tragedies, 3580  
Thouh the cause be secre and iclosid,  
Onto the tyme ther be a kyng deposid,

3549. infectyng R.

3555. began] gan H, R. 3557. bigan to encrese R.

3561. That men myhten R. 3562. Dispeired R.

3563. 2nd off ] off ther R. 3565. bi gan R.

3571. in soth this is] sothli this B, H. 3572. riht] om. R.

3578. these] of this R. 3580. eek] also R. 3581. secret R.



- Which slouh his fader & reffte hym off his liff,  
 And hath eek take his mooder to his wiff, 3584  
 Til this be doon and execut in deede,  
 Ther may be maad[e] no redempcioun;  
 But pestilence shal multeplie & spreede  
 Ay mor and mor thoruhout that regioun, 3588  
 Til onto tyme that he be put down  
 From his crowne, — which nat longe a-goon  
 His fader slouh among his mortal foon,  
 And hath his mooder weddid eek also, 3592  
 A-geyn[es] lawe and a-geyn al riht.  
 Til that vengau[n]ce vpon this crym be do,  
 Ther shal be werre, pestilence and fih[t],  
 Sorwe and\* gret striff, and euery maner wiht 3596  
 Off vengau[n]ce his neyh[e]bour shal hate;  
 Brother with brother, & blood with blood debate.  
 This al and sum; ther may be no socour.  
 Which brouht the peeple in ful gret heuynesse, 3600  
 For Tiresia the grete dyuynour,  
 Bi prophecie tolde hem thus expresse.  
 And atte laste, bi toknys and witenesse,  
 Men vndirstood be signes out shewyng, 3604  
 This pestilence was brouht in bi the kyng.  
 And thouh the peeple [ne] gaff no credence  
 To Tiresia, nor to his prophesie,  
 The queen Iocasta cauhte an euidence, 3608  
 And in hir herte a ful gret fantasie,  
 Speciali whan she dede espie  
 Off kyng Edippus the feet whan she sauh woundid,  
 How this rumour was vpon trouthe [I]groundid: 3612  
 Because also there was a dyuynour  
 Which tolde afforn Edippus sholde be  
 To Layus in Thebes successour.  
 Werbi the kyng, the queen, and the cite 3616  
 Fill in gret trouble and gret aduersite, —  
 Weel more than I be writyng can reporte,  
 For ther was nothyng that myhte hem reconforte.

The people  
 did not  
 believe that  
 Tiresias  
 meant  
 Œdipus, but

Jocasta  
 suspected  
 the truth.

She and  
 Œdipus  
 were greatly  
 troubled.

3588. Ay] Euer R, J. 3589. onto] vnto the R.  
 3592. eek] om. R, J. 3594. this] that R.  
 3596. 1st and is crossed out B. 3600. ful] om. R.  
 3604. be] and R. 3606. ne] om. H, P, R 3. 3607. nor] no R.  
 3611. sauh] se R, sey H. 3612. groundid H, R.  
 3614. afforn] to forn R. 3615. Thebes] thes R.  
 3617. and] and in R. 3619. reconforte] comfort H.

Ful ofte a-day Iocasta gan to swowne, 3620  
 Kyng Edippus sobbe, crie and weepe,  
 In salt[e] teris as they wolde hem drowne,  
 Deth craumpisshyng into ther brest gan creepe,  
 A-day compleynyng, a-nyht they may nat sleepe, 3624  
 Cursyng the hour off ther natyuyte,  
 That thei sholde a-bide for to see

The king  
 cast away  
 his crown  
 and tore out his  
 eyes and cried  
 day and night  
 for death.

Ther mortal chauns, ther dedli auenture,  
 Ther fortune also\*, which gan on hem frowne, 3628  
 Inpacient and doolful to endure,  
 Ther froward fate with hir lookis browne.  
 The kyng for ire cast a-wey his crowne,  
 And gan tarace, for constreynt off his peyne, 3632  
 Out off his hed his woful eyen tweyne.

Day and nyht he cried afftir deth,  
 Hatful to come\* in any manys siht,  
 Most desirous to yelden vp the breth, 3636  
 Woful in herte to come in any liht,  
 Croked for sorwe, feeble to stonde vpriht;  
 And speciali in his dedli distresse,  
 For dreed & shame he dared in derknesse. 3640

What grieved  
 him most was  
 that his sons  
 hated him,

The cruel constreynt off his most greuaunce  
 Was that his sonys hadde hym in despiht,  
 Which gan his sorwe gretli to auauunce,  
 For hym to scorne was set al ther deliht; 3644  
 Was neuer [man] that stood in a wers pliht.  
 For thus liggyng and destitut off cheer,  
 Onto the goddis he made this praiser,

so he prayed  
 the gods that  
 Polynices and  
 Eteocles might  
 bring one an-  
 other to de-  
 struction.

Besechyng hem with a ful doolful herte 3648  
 Vpon his wo to haue\* compassioun,  
 And that thei wolde, for tauenge his smerte,  
 Atween his sonys make a dyuysioun,  
 Ech to brynge other to destruccioun: 3652  
 This was his praiser pleyñli in substaunce,  
 That ech on other take may vengauunce

3620. a-day] in the day R. 3623. brest] hert R.  
 3624. nat] noth R. 3625. Cursyng] Outraynge R.  
 3628. also] eek B, H — gan] did R. 3630. lookis] lokkis R.  
 3632. be gan R. 3635. come] comen B, J, comon R.  
 3638. Croked] Corbide R. 3640. &] of H.  
 3642. hadden hem R.  
 3645. man is written between the columns in a later hand R.  
 3646. thus] om. H, P.  
 3649. to haue] ha sum B, haue sum J, haue some P.  
 3653. pleyñli] om. R. 3654. may take R.

- In yeeris fewe for ther onkynd[e]nesse. [p. 46]  
 Thei herd his praier, as ye han herd deuyse; 3656 His prayer was  
 The brethre too, thoruh ther cursidnesse, answered.  
 Euerich gan other mortali despise,  
 For lak off grace and for fals couetise,  
 Ech for his parti desirous in deede 3660  
 Toform other to regne and [to] succede.  
 And thus this brethre\* most infortunat,  
 A-tween hemsilff fill at discencioun;  
 And fynali this vnkynde[ly] debat 3664  
 Brouht al Thebes onto destruccioun:  
 Yit was ther first maad a convencioun,  
 Bi entirchaungyng\* that ech sholde regne a yeer,  
 The tother absent, go pleie & come no neer. 3668  
 This was concludid bi ther bothe assent  
 And bi accord off al the regioun.  
 Polynices rod foorth and was absent,  
 Ethyocles took first possessioun. 3672  
 But whan the yeer bi reuolucioun  
 Was come a-boute, he, fals off his entent,  
 Onto thaccord denyed to consent.  
 This was o cause off ther bothe stryues, 3676  
 Polynices thus put out off his riht. Adrastus, king  
 Til Adrastus, that kyng was\* off Argyues, of Argos, sent  
 Which thoruh al Grece grettest was off myht, Tydeus to  
 Sente onto Thebes Tideus a knyht, Thebes to help  
 His sone-in-lawe, to trete off this mateere, Polynices,  
 And the cause fynali to lere, 3680  
 Whethir the kyng callid Ethiocles  
 Wolde condescende off trouthe and off resoun 3684  
 To stynte werre and to cherisshe pes, but without  
 Affer thaccord and composicioun, avail.  
 Vp to delyuere Thebes the myhti toune

3657. brethern R.  
 3662. brethre] breed B, brethern R, H 5, Brethir H.  
 3663. Betwene R. 3664. thus vnkinde P.  
 3666. made first R.  
 3667. Bentirchaungyng B — a yeer] eir R.  
 3668. go] to R, J, P, H 5.  
 3670. the] that R. 3673. But] & H.  
 3675. consent] assent R. 3678. was kyng B.  
 3681. off] for H.  
 3683. Whethir] Wher thoruh R — callid] om. R.  
 3687. Vp] for H, om. P — the] that P.

Onto his brother, which absent was withoute, 3688  
Now that his yeer was fully come a-boute.

But he was fals, & frowardli gan varie,  
Ethiocrates, from his conuencioun.

Then Adrastus began a war on  
Eteocles in aid  
of Polynices,  
who had be-  
come his son-  
in-law. For which Adrastus no lenger wolde tarie, 3692  
Whan Tideus hadde maad relacioun;  
But callid anoon throuhout his regioun  
Alle worthi, bothe nyh and ferre,  
A-geyn[es] Thebes for to gynne a werre. 3696

For this cause, lich as ye shal lere,  
Polynices, to forsen his partie,  
I-weddid hadde the kyngis douhter deere,  
I meene Adrastus, flour of cheualrie, 3700  
Whan Tideus dede hym certefie  
Touchyng the answeere off Ethiocrates,  
And off his trouthe how he was rech[e]les,

Fals off his promys & cursidli forsworn; 3704  
For to his trouthe noon aduertence had he,  
Nor to thaccord that was maad befor  
Touchyng delyueraunce off Thebes the cite.  
But who that list this story cleerli see 3708  
Off these too brethre & ther discencioun,  
And how Adrastus lay tofor the toun,

And Tideus, thoruh his hih prowesse,  
Fauht bi the way[e] goyng on message, 3712  
And how off Grece al the worthynesse  
With kyng Adrastus wente in this viage,  
And off the myscheff that fill in ther passage  
For lak of water, til that Ysiphile, 3716  
Norice of Ligurgus, so fair vpon to see,

Tauhte Tideus to fynde out a ryueer,  
(She that dede in fairnesse so excell,)  
Nor how the serpent, most ougli off his cheer, 3720  
Off kyng Ligurgus the child slow at a well,  
Nor how Amphiorax fill a-doun to hell, —

3695. Alle] All the R. 3696. begynne R.  
3698. Polycynes R. 3706. befor] to forne H.  
3707. the delyueraunce R. 3709. brethern R.  
3714. this] his R.  
3720. Nor] Neyer R. 3721. a] the R.  
3722. Nor] Neithir R.

- Al to declare, me semeth it is no neede,  
 [For] in the siege of Thebes ye may it reede, 3724  
 The stori hool, and maad ther menciou<sup>n</sup>  
 Off other parti, ther puissaunce & ther myht,  
 And how Adrastus lay toforn the toun,  
 And how thei metten eueri day in fiht, 3728  
 And Tideus, the noble famous knyht  
 So renommed in actis marciall,  
 Was slayn, alas, as he fauht on the wall. Tydeus was  
 slain,  
 And how the brethre mette a-mong the pres, 3732  
 Lich too tigres or leouns that were wood,  
 With sharp[e] speris; this is dout[e]les,  
 Euerich off hem shadde other[s] herte\* blood:  
 This was ther fyn, & thus with hem it stood, 3736  
 Sauf at ther festis callid funerall,  
 Ther fill a merueile which reherse I shall.  
 Whan thei were brent into ashes dede, [p. 47] and on their  
 Off ther envie there fill a [ful] gret wonder: 3740 the funeral pyre  
 A-mong the brondes and the coles rede, the smokes  
 Hih in the hair the smokes wente assonder, parted in  
 The ton [to] oo parti and the tother yonder, twain.  
 To declare, the story list nat feyne, 3744  
 The grete hatrede that was atwen hem tweyne.  
 Thus for ther ire and fals discencioun,  
 Alle the lordis and al the cheualrie  
 Were slayn off Grece and also off the toun. 3748  
 And roote off all, myn auctour list nat lie,  
 Was fals alliaunce and fraternal envie;  
 And cheeff ground, with al the surplusage,  
 Who serche a-riht, was onkyndli mariage. 3752  
 The queen Iocasta felte hir part off payne  
 To seen hir childre ech off hem slen other,  
 Hir sone hir lord, blynd on his eyen tweyne,  
 Which to his sonys was fader & eek brother: 3756  
 Fortune wolde it sholde be noon other,

3723. semeth it is] sempte it was R.

3724. For] *om.* H, R 3 — the] thes R — it] *om.* R.

3726. other] eithir R — pouyschaunce R.

3732. brethern mettyn R. 3735. herte] hertis B.

3740. ful] *om.* H. 3743. to] *om.* H, on R 3.3745. betwene R. 3746. ther] *om.* R — fals] for fals H.

3752. serche] seche H — serche a-riht] sekith right R 3.

3753. part] payne R. 3754. children R.

3756. eek] also R.

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Eek Parkas sustre, which been in noumbre thre,  
Span so the threed at ther natyuute.

Eek whan Iocasta stood thus disconsolat, 3760  
And sauh off Thebes the subuersioun,  
The contre stroied, wast and desolat,  
The gentil blood shad off that regioun,  
Withoute confort or consolacioun, 3764  
Thouhte she myhte be no mor appeired;  
But off al hope fulli disespeired,

slew herself  
with Oedipus'  
sword.

Trist and heuy, pensiff & spak no woord,  
Hir sorwes olde & newe she gan aduerte, 3768  
Took the swerd off hym that was hir lord,  
With which Edippus smot Layus to the herte,  
She to fynisshe all hir peynes smerte,  
And fro the bodi hir soule to deuyde, 3772  
Roff hir-selff[e] thoruhout eueri side.

She weri was off hir woful liff,  
Seyng off Fortune the gret[e] frowardnesse,  
How hir diffame & sclandre was so riff, 3776  
And off Edippus the gret[e] wrechidnesse,  
Eek off hir soness the gret onkynd[e]nesse:  
Alle these thyngis weied on hir so sore,  
For distresse that she list lyue no more. 3780

Sorrow caused  
her beauty to  
fade.

Bochas writith, the flour off hir fairnesse,  
Constreynt off sorwe causid it to fade;  
The famous liht also\* off hir noblesse  
And al the cleernesse off hir daies glade 3784  
With vnwar harmys was so ouerlade,  
Off verrai angwissh, that she hirselff dede hate,  
So inli contrari [disposid] was hir fate.

Death takes no  
heed of high  
or low estate.

Thus deth devoureth with his bittir gall 3788  
Ioie and sorwe, deuoid off al mercy;  
And with his darte he maketh douz to fall

3758. Eek] Also R — sustren H.  
3759. the] ther H. 3760. Eek] Also R.  
3761. sauh] sihe R. 3762. stroied] distried R.  
3764. comfort H.  
3768. Hir] His R — newe] ner R. 3773. eueri] eithir R.  
3778. Eek] Also R. 3783. also] eek B, eke R 3, P, H.  
3784. hir] his R. 3785. sche was R.  
3787. disposid] om. H — hir] to hir H. 3788. his] hir H.  
3789. deuoid] auoyde R. 3790. his] hir H — he] she H.



Riche and poore, hem markyng sodenly:  
His vnwar strook smyt[eth] indifferently, 3792  
From hym refusyng fauour & al meede,  
Off all estatis he takith so litil heede.

Bet is to deie than lyue in wrechidnesse,  
Bet is to deie than euer endure peyne, 3796 But it is better  
to die than live  
in misery.  
Bet is an eende than dedli heuynesse,  
Bet is to deie than euer in wo compleyne;  
And where-as myscheeff doth at folk disdeyne  
Bi woful constreynt off long contynuaunce, 3800  
Bet is to deie than lyue in such greuaunce.

Taketh example heeroff and a preeff  
Off kyng Edippus, that was so longe a-go,  
Off queen Iocasta, that felte so gret myscheeff, 3804  
And off ther childre remembrith eek also,  
Which euer lyued in envie, sorwe\* & wo:  
Fortune, allas, duryng al ther daies  
Was founde so froward to hem at all assaies. 3808

Touchyng Edippus processe fynde I noon  
What eende he made in conclusioun,  
Sauf Bochas writith, how the kyng Creon,  
Cosyn and heir bi successioun, 3812 Creon exiled  
Œdipus, and I  
cannot say how  
he died.  
Exilid hym cheyned ferr out off the toun,  
Where he endured in myscheeff, sorwe & dreed,  
Till Antropos ontwynid his lyuis threed.

### ¶ Lenvoye.

**I**N this tragedie foure thinges ye may see, 3816 Kingdoms dis-  
tracted by in-  
ternal strife  
cannot endure.  
The pride off Iabyn & fals presumpcioun,  
Off queen Iocasta the gret aduersite,  
Off kyng Edippus thyndynacioun  
To vices all, and the deuysioun 3820  
Off the too brethre, pleykli & tassure,  
Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

3791. markyng] makynge R. 3792. His] hir H — smyteth]  
smyt MSS. *except* P, H 5. 3793. hym] hir H. 3794. he]  
she H.

3795-8, 3801. R, P, H 5 *write* Bettir or Better *instead* of Bet.  
3796. endure] tendure H, to liff (liue) in R, P, H 5, lyue in J,  
to suffre R 3. 3799. at] al R.

3805. remembrith eek] remembre R.

3806. lyued in envie sorwe] lyueden in sorwe envie B, H —  
lyuede euer R 3.

3813. hym] om. H 3814. in] om. R. 3816. foure] thre R.

[*Omne Regnum  
in se diuisum  
desolabitur.*]<sup>1</sup>

There must  
be peace and  
justice,

as is shewn  
by the example  
of Thebes.

Princes and  
Princesses,  
cherish your  
subjects if you  
would reign  
long.

For who sauh euer kyngdam or contre  
Stonde in quyeet off ther possessioun,  
But yiff ther wer pes, riht and equyte  
And iust accord, withoute discencioun,  
Void off ontrouthe and fals collusioun,  
Pleyntli declaryng bexauple & bi scripture,  
Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

Seeth heer exauple off Thebes the cite,  
And how that noble myhti region,  
Thoruh ther\* froward [fals] duplicite  
With were brouht to ther destruccioun;  
Ther promys brokyn, and ther couert tresoun,  
Shewed bi the[r] harmys, impossible to recure,  
Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, which han the souereynte  
Ouer the peple and domynacioun,  
Yiff ye list lyue longe in felice,  
Cherisshith your subiectis, doth noon extorsioun,  
And aduertisith off wisdam and resoun,  
As this tragedie doth to you discure,  
Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

[How Atreus Kyng of Messene wrou3t ayenst his  
brothir Thiestes / slouh. his iij. childre dis-  
membrid hem in pecys made Thiestes to ete of  
ther flessch and drynke of ther blood.]<sup>1</sup>

Bochas was  
preparing to  
write the story  
of Duke The-  
seus,

**B**OCHAS the poete, auctour off this book,  
Hym purposyng to-gidre to compile  
Dyuers stories, anoon his penne he took,  
Hym remembryng withynne a litil while,  
In this chapitle gan direct\* his stile  
To write the story, and be compendious,  
Afforn all othre off Duk. Theseus,  
Lord off Athenys, a famous gret cite,  
Ryht strong and myhti vpon eueri side, —  
But at his bak Bochas dede oon see,

3825. pes riht] rith pees R. 3828. bi ensauple R.  
3830. ensauple R. 3832. ther] ther most B, H — fals] om. H.  
3833. brouht] weren brouht R. 3835. ther] the H.  
3837. han] had R.  
3839. long lyue J — felice] prosperite H. 3842. As] al H.  
3848. gan] bigan R — directen B. 3851. Athenys] Asye H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 20 verso.

Which cried loude & bad he sholde a-bide:  
 "Bochas," quod he, "fro the me list nat hide  
 My woful cas, nor in no wise spare  
 My pitous compleynt to the to declare!

when suddenly  
 Thyestes, son  
 of Pelops, ap-  
 peared before  
 him and said,

3856

I am Thiestes, be-spreynt al with wepyng,  
 Drownyd in teris, as thou maist weel see,  
 Whilom sone off the myhti kyng  
 Philistynes, and born also parde  
 Off queen Pellopia, excellyng off beute;  
 And for thou art desirous for tendite  
 Off peple onhappi, & ther wo to write,

3860

3864

My will is this, that thou anon proceede  
 To turne thi stile, and tak thi penne blyue,  
 Leue\* Theseus, tak now off hym non heede,  
 But my tragedie first that thou descryue.  
 For I suppose that in al thi lyue,  
 That thou sauh neuer a thyng mor dolerous,  
 Mor onhappi, mor froward nor pitous

3868

"Leave  
 Theseus and tell  
 my tragedy  
 first. Never  
 was there one  
 more terrible."

Than is, allas, my mortal auenture,  
 Incomparable, the sorwe surmountyng  
 Off queen Iocasta, most woful creature,  
 Or off Edippus, his fate ay compleynyng:  
 For my compleynt haueth non endyng,  
 But lastith euere, & bereth me wisesse,  
 No wo rassemblith onto myn heuynesse."

3872

3876

And with that woord John Bochar stille stood,  
 Ful sobirly to yiue hym audience;  
 And in the place demourli he a-bod  
 To heere the substaunce off his mortal offence,  
 Which thus began to shewen his sentence.  
 "O Iohn," quod he, "I pray the take good heed"  
 My wo to write that men may it reed.

3880

So Bochas  
 paused to  
 listen.

3884

Allas! my brother, roote off onkynd[e]nesse,  
 Attreus callid, off tresoun sours & well,  
 And fyndere out off tresoun & falsnesse,

3888

"John," said  
 Thyestes, "my  
 brother Atreus  
 was a great  
 scoundrel,

3860. Whilom] Sumtyme R — sone] be sone H.

3863. for] om. R.

3865. that thou anon] anone at thou do R.

3867. Leue] Leff B — now] om. R.

3868. that] at R. 3870. sih R. 3871. nor] neithir R.

3875. ay] euer R. 3876. haueth] hath R, H.

3877. euere] om H.

3883. his] the R.

And all other in fraude doth precell,  
Whos couert hate is more than I can tell —  
I supposyng, off verray innocence,  
In hym no malice, deceit, nor offence, 3892

but I trusted  
him as a  
brother should.

But as a brother sholde his brother triste,  
I trusted hym off herte, will & thouht;  
Bi apparence non othir cause I wiste,  
For in his persone I supposid nouht 3896  
That euer he koude so fals a thyng ha wrouht.  
But who may soner a-nother man deceyue,  
Than he in whom no malice men conceyue?

I knew no  
wrong in him.

I dempte off hym as off my trewe brother, 3900  
Wenyng he hadde feithful been to me;  
I sauh no signe, nor I kneuh non other,  
In hym supposyng no duplicite.  
But, o allas, how myhte it euer be, 3904  
Or who dede euer in any story fynde  
Blood onto blood to be so onkynde!

There is no  
need of my  
telling you  
about the great  
worth and no-  
bility of our  
ancestors.

I will passe ouer to telle the worthynesse, [p. 49]  
Touchyng thestatis off our progenytours, 3908  
Off our kynreede, and the gret noblesse,  
I telle no thyng, nor off our predecessours,  
Nor off my youthe how passid been the flours—  
I leue al this, and onto mynde call 3912  
The wrechidnesse that I am in fall.

My brother  
falsely accused  
me of corrupt-  
ing his wife's  
virtue, exiled  
me from our  
country and  
tried to kill  
me

My brothir fond a fals occasioun  
A-geyn[e]s me, and gan a cause feyne  
To ban[y]she me out off our regioun, 3916  
And gan at me off hatrede so disdeyne,  
Vpon me affermyng in certeyne,  
In our kyngdam, which callid is Missene,  
I sholde haue ley[e]n bi his wiff the queene. 3920  
This he compassid ful falsli off malis,  
Hymself weel knowyng that it was nat so,  
Ay founde onkynde, and in his auy

3889. doth] he dothe H 5, P — precell] excelle R.  
3892. nor] ne non R, nor noon H 5, J. 3893. his]a R.  
3895. Bi] For by H.  
3902.] I see nothyng neithir I knowe non othir R.  
3910. nor] nethir R, neither P, H 5. 3912. onto] to R.  
3915. began R. 3917. bi gan R.  
3920. I sholde] In shuld R. 3922. nat] no R.  
3923. Ay] Euere R.

- Nat lik my brother, but my dedli fo; 3924  
 And to encrece gret parcell off my wo,  
 Bi long processe in his entencioun  
 He ymagined my destruccioun.
- And his cheeff cause was fals[e] couetise, 3928 because he  
 Touchyng this thyng which he dede on me feyne; wanted the en-  
 And yit this kyngdam, treuli to deuise, tire kingdom  
 Shold haue be partid of riht atwen vs tweyne: for himself.
- But a-geyn trouthe he dede so ordeyne 3932  
 Me to exile\* out off that regioun,  
 Hymself allone to haue possessioun.
- Yit in his herte he caste a-nother wile 3936  
 To myn ondoynge and desolacioun: Afterwards he  
 To the place where he me dede exile, pretended re-  
 Vnder a shadwe off fals collusioun pentance,
- To make a maner reuocacioun, 3940  
 Off brethirheed shewyng a pretense,  
 Me to resorte a-geyn to his presence,
- To be accepted, as a brother sholde, 3944 and we made up  
 With ful accord stille with hym tabide, our differences,
- All iniuries, off which afforn I tolde,  
 On outhir part forgete & set a-side,  
 That nothyng afftir sholde our loue deuyde;  
 But of oon will and oon entencioun
- Leede al our liff withoute dyuysioun. 3948
- Wheroff the peeples was ful glad and liht  
 Thoruhout Missene the myhti regioun,  
 At my resortyng fyndyng euery wiht  
 Redi off herte and hool affeccoun 3952
- Me to receyue into that noble toun;  
 And noon so redy, bi signes out shewyng,  
 To make me cheer, in soth, as was the kyng.
- There is no damage in comparisoun, 3956  
 That may be likned, bi no rassemblaunce,  
 To feyned trouthe and symulacioun, There is noth-  
 ing worse than  
 fraud hid under  
 an honest face,

3924. but] bud lik R.

3928. This and the next two stanzas are transposed with the following four in R.

3931. departid R — of riht] trewly H.

3933. exile] besile B, R, J, besyle H 5 (exile H, P, R 3).

3937. did me R. 3940. he shewyng H. 3944. toforme H.

3945. partye R — forgot H. 3947. all off oo will R.

3949. was] were R — J, P om. the four following stanzas.

3950. the] that R. 3953. receyue] resorte R.

Whan fraude is hid with a fair contenaunce,  
 Pretendyng trouthe outward bi disseyuaunce, 3960  
 And vndirnethe, off most fals entent,  
 Off doubilnesse darith the serpent.

As vnder floures is shroudid the dragoun,  
 For to betraisshe bi sodeyn violence 3964  
 Such folk as haue no suspeciuon,  
 But treuli meene in ther peur innocence,

like a snake  
 beneath flowers.

Til thei be cauht dispurueied off diffence,  
 As is a fissh with bait off fals plesaunce, 3968  
 The hook nat seyn, to brynge hym to myschaunce.

Thus I came  
 home. My  
 brother acted  
 as if he were  
 overwhelmed  
 with joy,

Thus semblabli, at myn hom comyng  
 I was receyued with eueri circumstaunce,  
 Lich as halff heir and brother to the kyng; 3972

And he, pretendyng, as bi contenaunce,  
 That he hadde so inli gret plesaunce  
 Off my repair, off\* trouthe he tolde so,  
 For, reioisshyng, saide he wolde go 3976

Onto his goddis to doon sum obseruaunce  
 For this accord, and humble sacrefise,  
 Made his mynystris with feithful attendaunce  
 Tawaite on me in al ther beste wise; 3980  
 It nedith nat to tellyn nor deuise,  
 Nor in wrytyng in bookis for to sette  
 Halff the ioie he made whan we mette.

and we em-  
 braced one an-  
 other weeping.

First how freendli he dede me embrace 3984  
 Off hertli gladnesse withynne his armis tweyne,  
 And how for ioie the teris on his face

Ful entierli gan doun distill & reyne,  
 That, for my part, I koude me nat restreyne, 3988  
 But that I muste off frenshipec fraternall  
 Weepe as dede he in his estat roiall.

Innocent lambes  
 are easily  
 tricked.

The wili wolff that cast hym to deuoure [p. 50]  
 The celi lamb, which can no diffence, 3992

Nor non helpe hymselfen to socoure,  
 So feeble he is to make resistance,  
 Which demeth trouthe off fals apparence —  
 What wonder ist the fraude nat conceyued, 3996  
 Thouh such lambes onwarli be deceyued?

3964. be trousse R. 3975. off] & off B, H.

3980. Tawaite] To wate R. 3981. nor] ne R.

3982. Nor] Neithir R — in] bi R.

3984. embrace H. 3988. partie R.

3992. no] non R, noon J. 3993. Nor] Ne R — hym silff R.



- Thouh that roses at mydsomer be ful soote,  
 Yit vndirnethe is hid a ful sharp spyne;  
 Summe fressh[e] floures han a ful bittir roote, 4000  
 And lothsum gall can sugre eek vndermyne;  
 In dreedful stormys the sonne among doth shyne,  
 And vnder a shadwe off feyned freendliheed,  
 Ther is no frenship so pereilous for to dreed. 4004  
 Thus remembryng the feithful woordis stable  
 Off my brother shewed onto me,  
 At our meeting the kyssyng amyable,  
 Thassurid couenantis off our fraternite — 4008  
 But offte tyme men may beholde and see  
 That lelies growe among these netlis thikke,  
 And flourdelis amynd these weedie wikke.  
 Thus whil I restid in the kyngis hous,  
 Nothyng aduerting his dedli cruelte,  
 His olde hatreed was so venymous  
 And so odible to destroie me,  
 Hymself tauenge he took my childre thre, 4016  
 And secreli — is it nat a wonder? —  
 He kutte her throtes with a knyf assonder.  
 For he thouhte that it dede hym good  
 Hem to dismember into pecis smale, 4020  
 And in a vessel for to gadre ther blood,  
 Whil thei lay still & loked on hym\* ful pale.  
 This was his deede in a desert vale,  
 Withynne a kauē, that no man sholde espie 4024  
 Tresoun conspired off his fals tirannye.  
 This was the substaunce off his sacrefise,  
 To sle my childre & do ther throtis bleede!  
 I trowe the goddis theroff dede agrise, 4028  
 Off his fals offryng whan thei token heede.  
 He dede ther membris afftir roste & seede,  
 And with this viaunde most abhomynable  
 He made me be serued at the table. 4032

Midsummer  
 roses are  
 fragrant, but  
 there are sharp  
 thorns beneath.

No friendship  
 is more danger-  
 ous than one  
 that is feigned.

While I dwelt  
 in my brother's  
 house, suspect-  
 ing nothing, he  
 cut the throats  
 of my three  
 children,  
 dismembered  
 them,

and had them  
 roasted and  
 served up to  
 me at table.

3998. Thofe be Roos R 3 — that] the P.

4001. sugre eek] al so suger R, J.

4011. amynd] in myddis R, J, H 5, among H, amonge R 3 —  
 weedis] wides J.

4017. secreli] sikyrly R — it is not R.

4022. &] om. H — hym] hem B — ful] om. R, J, P, H 5.

4027. do ther throtis] make ther hertis R, J, H 5.

4032. me be serued] be seruyd me H.

I am sure the  
gods were dis-  
pleased. Even  
the sun was  
so horrified  
that he  
shrouded  
his light.

In couert cruses, also thus it stood,  
To staunche my thrust, thoruh his cruel vengauce  
He made me vnknowe to drynke ther blood.  
Was nat this thyng to goddis displeaunce? 4036  
Yis, I dar sey[e]n; for bi demonstraunce,  
Vpon this deede, withoute mor obstacle,  
The sonne in heuene shewed a myracle.

Which sore agrisid\* myht[e] nat beholde 4040  
With his bemys theron to caste his siht,  
For displeaunce his clernesse gan withholde,  
And for vengauce to withdrawe his liht,  
The day turnyng for horroure onto nyht, 4044  
Whan he shon brihdest in his mydday speer,  
Shrowded his face and wolde nat appeer.

Unwittingly I  
ate my children  
and drank  
their blood,  
which grieues  
me so that I  
can hardly  
speak of it.

But I, allas, vpon this cas horrible,  
That koude nat ymagyne nouthur thynte 4048  
On ony mater that was so odible,  
Eet off ther flessch & off ther blood dede drynke,  
Which so sore doth in myn herte synke,  
That I may nat, touchyng this auenture, 4052  
The circumstaunces for constreynt to discure.

Bochas, did  
you ever hear  
of a more un-  
happy man?

It nedith me nat to make rehersaile  
Touchyng myn exil, off alle maner thynges,  
Off dyuers sorwes that me dede assaile, 4056  
My woful sihhes, nor my greuouse wepynges,  
Nor vpon nyhtes my dolorous wakynges,  
My pouert[e], nor how I stood in dreed  
To lese my liffe; wheroff, Bochas, tak heed, 4060

And remembre alle [the] circumstaunces:  
Yiff euer thou sauh, off hih or low degre,  
Mor contrari or mor onhappi chaunces,  
Than thou herd remembrid heer off me. 4064  
Weie in ballaunce my sorwes, and lat see  
Yiff any sorwe or myscheuys onrecurid  
May countirpeise to that I haue endurid!

4035. to] *om.* R.

4037. demonstracion R.

4040. sore agrisid] for agrisid B, H, R 3 — myhtnat B.

4042. bi gan R. 4048. nethir R.

4050. &] *om.* R — dede] also did I R. 4051. in] too R.

4053. circumstaunce R — to] *om.* R. 4057. nor] ne R.

4058, 9. Nor] Neithir R.

4061. the] *om.* H, R 3 — circumstaunce H 5, syrcumstaunce P.

4063. chaunce P, H 5. 4066. mischeeff R.

Myn infortunyes, I fond hem ay so fell, 4068  
 Withoute fauour & socour dispurueied,  
 My brother euer on me so cruell,  
 That I ful offte desired to haue deied;  
 For to this day my sperit hath be conueied 4072  
 With sorwe and wo, deuoid off al refuge,  
 Wherefore I pray, O Bochas be my iuge,  
 And in thi writyng leff me nat behynde, [p. 51] You must not  
 Nor in thi book[e] that thou nat disdeyne 4076 leave me out  
 Among tho folk that thou ha[ue] me in mynde, of your book  
 Which that for sorwe weepe, waile & pleyne." of tragedies."  
 And thus Thiestes, rehersyng al his peyne,  
 Lich as he wolde hymself on pecis reende, 4080  
 Maad onto Bochas off his tale an eende.

[How Atreus accusid himsilf of mordre and his  
brothir vpon auoutry don with Europa the  
quene.]<sup>1</sup>

**A**TREUS afftir, with a ful pale cheer,  
 And off envie ful ded in his visage,  
 Onto Iohn Bochas gan\* approche neer, 4084  
 Lich as he hadde be fallen in a rage,  
 And furiously abraid in his langage,  
 "How may this be, that lik a man wer wood,  
 Thiestes hath his venym sowe a-brod, 4088  
 And lik a rebaude falsli me accusid,  
 Nat-withstandyng that I ful cleerli see  
 Myn infortunyes, which may nat be refusid,  
 So sore, allas, thei werke ageyn[e]s me! 4092  
 And thouh Thiestes fals & ontrewe be,  
 And to the, Bochas, with a face pale  
 Ageyn[e]s me hath forged heer a tale  
 Which in effect shal be founde ontrewe, 4096  
 Yiff I ha[ue] space my compleynt to declare.  
 For I poynt to telle a tale newe  
 Fro poynt to poynt, & for no man to spare,

At this, Atreus  
appeared, pale  
with anger,  
and said:  
"Thyestes  
lies like the  
ribald and  
madman he is,

and you, too,  
Bochas, are  
telling tales  
about me.

4076. Nor] Neithir R.

4084. gan] he gan B, H, P, R 3, began J, byganne H 5 — he  
began to proche R — approche] to approche H 5.

4087. wer] most R 3.

4091. which pat R. 4094. to] vnto R.

<sup>1</sup>MS. J. leaf 22 recto.

The truth is,  
that Thyestes  
was the cause  
of all my mis-  
fortunes.

How he was roote & ground off al my care,  
And euene lik as it is befall

4100

Reherse the gynnyng off my sorwes all.

Whilom whan I regned in Messene,  
Off age lusti, flouryng in my fresshnesse,  
With my wyff Europa, that was queene,  
Most renommed that tyme off hir fairnesse,  
Thiestes thanne, ground off al falsnesse,  
As a traitour his tyme dede espie,  
Thoruh his fals fraude & his flat[e]rie

4104

4108

He corrupted  
Europa my  
wife by his  
fraud and flat-  
tery, an intoler-  
able thing to  
do, and an  
abomination  
to the gods,

Compassid a mene withynne my cite  
Bi slehti wilis that were incomparable,  
To corrupte my wyuys chastite,  
Mi bed defoulyng, a thyng intollerable,  
And to the goddis verray abhomynable —  
Vsyng the queen to his flessfli plesaunce,  
Til onto tyme that bi continuaunce

4112

4116

and had two  
or three sons  
by her, which  
I thought my  
own. After-  
wards this swine  
had a son,  
Egisthus, by  
his own  
daughter.

She bi hym hadde sonys too or thre,  
Echon brouht forth in fals auout[e]rye.  
Deemyng euer that thei hadde be  
Myn owne childre, til that I dede espie,  
How that this swyn thoruh his fals lecherie,\*  
This Thiestes, afftir Europa,  
Lay bi his douhter callid Pellopia.

4120

And bi processe foorth a child she brouhte,  
Callid Egistus, which whan he cam to age,  
As seith Bochas, ful gret tresoun he wrouhte;  
For bi his malice and his gret outrage  
Destroied was al hooli the lynage  
Off Tantalus, which bi his lyuyng  
In Frigia regned as lord and kyng.

4124

4128

They cast  
Egisthus out  
to wild beasts,  
to prevent  
scandal;

But this Egistus, off whom I spak afforn,  
Falsli begote, myn auctour writ the same,  
Off Pellopia, anon as he was born,  
To hide the sclaudre & also the diffame  
Off Thiestes, and for to saue his name,

4132

4102. begynnyng R.

4103. Whilom] Summe tyme R — Misseene H.

4104. my] om. H. 4106. hir] om. R. 4107. as grounde R.

4108. dede espie] asprie R. 4115. to] om. R.

4119. euer] om. R, H. 4120. children R.

4121. lecherie] trecherie B. 4125. he] þat he R.

4131. to forn R. 4132. wryteth R.

- Whan that he was but a day off age,  
 He was out cast to beestis ful sauage 4136
- To be deuoured, the story is weel kouth.  
 A mylch[e] goot God list for hym prouyde,  
 To fostren hym in his tendre youth, 4140  
 He day & nyht liggyng bi hir side.  
 Withynne the forest thus he dede abide  
 Onto tyme that he gan growe in age;  
 Thanne to the court he holdeth his passage, 4144
- As onknowe to eueri maner wiht,  
 Wher he herde, abidyng in houshold,  
 Off his kenreede, & how, ageyn al riht,  
 Thiestes was presumptuous and bold, 4148  
 Bi his deceytis\* compassid manyfold,  
 With Europa my wiff to haue a-do,  
 And on Pelopia begat a child also,
- Which was hymself, as he dede vndirstonde 4152  
 Bi euydencis many mo than on.  
 Wherefore off malice he took on honde,  
 On me, his vncle, tauengid been anon.  
 For Thiestes, cheuest off all my fon, 4156  
 Myn owne brothir, made Egistus blyue  
 To make a suerd thoruhout myn herte ryue.
- Thus bi this moordre, conspired bi tresoun, [p. 52]  
 On me Atreus, liggyng pale and ded, 4160  
 Cam Thiestes to haue\* possessioun,  
 And sette a crowne oniustli on his hed.  
 He nouthre hadde conscience nor dreed,  
 Routhes to see my woundis bleede, 4164  
 With this that he myhte in my land succede.
- This same Egistus, ful falsli in his liff,  
 As a yong braunche spronge out off tresoun,  
 Lay bi Clymestra, which that was the wiff 4168  
 Off the noble worthi kyng Agamenoun,  
 Liggyng a-siege toffor Troie toun.  
 And this Egistus, which is a thyng nat fair,  
 Moordred hym also in Grece at his repair. 4172

but he was  
 fostered by a  
 goat and grew  
 up and came  
 to my court,  
 where he  
 learned who his  
 parents were.

Incited by  
 Thyestes, he  
 ran a sword  
 through my  
 heart.

Thus Thyestes  
 became king.

Egistus after-  
 wards was the  
 paramour of  
 Clytemnestra.  
 and murdered  
 Agamemnon.

4139. mylke H, R 3 — prouyde] purueie R.

4141. He] by H — nyht & day R.

4145. *This and the next three stanzas are om. in R, J.*

4149. deceytes] desertis B. 4156. cheuest] cheff H, chefe R 3.

4158. ryue] arrive H. 4161. han B.

Which story,  
Bochas, is most  
terrible, that of  
Oedipus, of  
Iocasta, or  
mine?

Wherefore, O Bochas, off herte I pray[e] the,  
Which off these stories is now most terrible? —

Off Edippus, Iocasta, or off me?

Telle on anon, yiff it be possible, 4176

Which off ther\* sorwes is founde most penyble,

Off Theban brethre, most ful off wo & teene,

Or off vs tweyne brethern off Missene?

I admit I  
roasted Thyestes'  
children,  
but he begot  
them on Europa,  
my wife; and  
although murder  
and treason are  
hateful, he  
wronged me  
first.

I am a-knowe, as for my partie,

4180

Off vengauce I dede a cruel deede:

I slouh his childre off malice & envie

And rosted hem, whan that thei wer dede,

Onli because, yiff thou list take heede, 4184

That he begat hem, as roote off al this striff,

Vpon Europa, which that was my wiff.

Such hatful thyngis echman sholde lothe,

Which appertene to moordre and to tresoun: 4188

Thus may I seyn, we been vnhappi bothe,

He first bi trespas off fornyacioun

Doon bi the queen withynne my regioun,

And I, disclaundrid, on the tōthir side, 4192

Off hasti vengauce to been an homycide.

It was tip for  
tap,

My bed he fouled bi his auoutrie,

To God & man a thyng most detestable;

And I off malice and fals malencolie 4196

Slouh his childre & serued hem atte table.

Thus entirchaungyng, yiff it be comendable,

Ech was desirous, thoruh our vnhappi chaunce,

Vpon other for to do vengauce. 4200

and Seneca  
tells all about  
us in his  
tragedies."

Our gret hatreede, most odious founde att all,

Our cruel deedis wrouht on outhir side,

Senech rehersith hem in especiall

In his tragedies; and ther he doth deuyde 4204

Our compleyntis, our malice & our pride,

Our fatal eende in sorwe & myscheeff fyned,

Whan Antropos our lyuys threed hath twyned."

4174. now] *om.* R, J.

4177. ther] these B — founde] *om.* J, R, H 5 — sorwes] stories R 3.

4178. brethern R. 4179. Mycene P. 4180. for] *om.* R.

4182. &] & of R. 4184. bi cause repeated in R.

4188. 2nd to] *om.* R. 4190. He] The R.

4194. he fouled] defoulid R.

4206. fyned] feyned R.



Whan Iohn Bochas fulli hadde espied  
 Off these too brethre thaccusaciouns,  
 And how thei hadde maliciousli replied  
 Ech ageyn other in ther discenciouns,  
 He gan dulle to heere ther mocions,  
 Put vp his penne, & wrot nat mor a woord  
 Off the[r] furie nor off ther fals discord.

4208 After hearing  
 the stories of  
 these two  
 brothers,  
 Bochas put  
 away  
 his pen and  
 refused to write  
 4212 another word  
 about them.

## [Lenvoy.]

**T**HIS tragedie sheweth a figure,  
 A maner ymage & also a liknesse,  
 How contrari it is onto nature,  
 Blood onto blood to shewe onkynd[e]nesse.  
 This woful story can ber [ful] weel witnesse,  
 All such debatis been, as ye shal fynde,  
 Hatful to God and contrary onto kynde.

4216 This tragedie  
 shews how  
 hateful  
 brotherly  
 strife is to  
 God and  
 Nature.

For there is non mor dreedful auenture,  
 Than in kynredis to fynde frowardnesse,  
 Nor no damage mor pereilous to endure,  
 Than in frenshepes whan there is straungenesse  
 A maner parti; bexauple I dar expresse,  
 To seen the tre debate ageyn the rynde,  
 To God were hatful and contrary onto kynde.

4220  
  
  
  
 4224 Nothing is  
 more dreadful  
 than enmity  
 between  
 relations.

Eueri beeste and eueri creature  
 Loueth his semblable, off kyndli riht, I gesse;  
 And whan on trouthe\* tweyne hertis assure,  
 Vndepartid, off verray parfinesse,  
 It were a vicious froward cursidnesse,  
 Ther loue so knet, to losne it or onbynde,  
 Hatful to God and contrari onto kynde.

4232 Every living  
 creature loves  
 his fellow of  
 natural right.  
 It were a  
 vicious deed to  
 make them  
 quarrel.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, doth your besi cure  
 Fro you tauoide striff, fraude & doubilnesse,  
 Remembrith you vpon thunhappi eure  
 Off these too brethre & off ther wrechidnesse,  
 And off ther bothe malicious wilfulnesse,  
 And how ther stryues — hath this weel in mynde —  
 To God was hatful and contrary onto kynde.

4236 Princes and  
 Princesses, try  
 to avoid  
 strife, fraud,  
 and deceit;  
 such things  
 are very  
 4240 hateful  
 to God.

4208. had fully H. 4212. began R — ther] the R.  
 4213. nat] no R, H, R 3.  
 4214. nor] neither R.  
 4219. ful weel] om. P. 4220. as] om. H.  
 4225. Frenshippe R. 4227. ayenst R.  
 4231. ontrithe B. 4234. losne it] louse R.  
 4238. Remembre R — eure] cure R. 4241. haveth R.

[Off Duk Theseus and Adriane pat saued his liff  
in the Caue/ and how he lik a forsworn man  
forsook hir and weddid faire Phedra/ whiche  
aftirward slouh hirsilf.]<sup>1</sup>

Athens was  
once called the  
nurse of phi-  
losophers and  
sun of all  
sciences.

A THENES whilom, whan it was in his  
floures, [p. 53]

Was callid norice of philisophres wise, 4244  
Princesse off poetis & expert oratoures,  
Sonne off all sciences, as clerkis can deuise,  
Whens al cunnyng most cleerli dede arise,  
Named off Grece the lanterne and the liht, 4248  
Which thoruh al erthe shadde his beemys briht.

Its renown  
shone in every  
land,

With noble titles, which been out off noumbre,  
In eueri coost his renoun dede shyne,  
The fame theroff was clipped with non ousmbre, 4252  
All other scooles it dede so enlumyne;  
For in that cite, pleyntli to termyne,  
Off the seuene artis, as doun from on\* hedspryng,  
Ther ran out ryuers and stremys off al cunnyng. 4256

and only free  
men of good  
family could  
study there.

These sciences were callid liberall,  
Onli off fredam, fraunchise and liberte;  
For off a stok that were preued thrall,  
Ther sholde no braunche studie in that cite, 4260  
But thilke blood that were founde fre,  
Bothe be discent & lyneal hih noblesse,  
Ther to scoleie sholde haue interesse.

The city was  
sacred to  
Minerva

This cite was sacrid to Mynerue, 4264  
For ther wisdam and ther sapience;  
Off Mercurie the feestis thei obserue,  
For rethorik and for eloquence;  
And myhti Mars gaff hem influence 4268  
With glade aspectis, ther parti to a-mende,  
Noblesse off knyghthod ther clergie to diffende.

and was famous  
for its dukes  
and kings,  
among whom  
Theseus, son of  
Ægeus,

This toun was nobleied be title of other thynges,  
And most glorious reknyd in that age 4272  
Be successioun off dukes and off kynges,

4246. Sunne] Some H. 4248. Name R.  
4253. scooles] om. R. 4254. determyne R.  
4255. on] an B, H. 4256. stremys & Ryvers H.  
4260. Ther] The R. 4266. thei] om. R.  
4270. ther] the R. 4273. 2nd off] om. R.

<sup>1</sup>MS. J. leaf 22 verso.

A-mong[es] which duk Theseus bi lynage,  
Sone off Egistus, ful fressh off his corage,  
Excell yng\* alle of prudence & manheede  
That euer dede the crowne ther posseede.

4276

For to that cite, thoruh his hih noblesse,  
In ther diffencis such trust, such [af]fiance  
He gaff to hem bi his expert prowesse,  
Off his triumphes so gret habundaunce,  
And speciali ther renoun to auauunce,  
He made hem fre ther truage for to lete  
Ageyn Mynos the myhti kyng off Crete.

4280 who slew the  
Minotaur and  
freed the  
Athenians from  
their tribute,  
was the most  
excellent.

4284

For bi his force, the story is weel kouth,  
Them to fraunchise and al that regioun,  
The Mynotaur he slouh in tendre youth;  
And afftirward he off deuocioun,  
Taquite hymself[e] lik a champioun,  
Theroff made solempne sacrefise  
To Iubiter in most humble wise;

4288

And in a theatre callid Maratoun,  
Duk Theseus hadde this victorie.  
Afftir he wente to Colchos with Iasoun,  
Cheeff off counseil, as makid is memorie,  
And bi processe to augmente his glorie,  
With Hercules his brother to conueie,  
Geyn Amazonas he wente to werreie, —

4292

Afterwards  
Theseus went  
to Colchos  
with Jason and  
to Femenye  
with Hercules,

4296

Conquered hem, his manhod was weel seene,  
His force, his noblesse in that mortal stryff.  
And afftir that, Ypolita the queene  
This Theseus took onto his wiff.  
And for his brother he list iuparte his liff,  
Duk Pirotheus, whan he dede vndirtake  
The centaures to outraie for his sake.

4300

where he mar-  
ried Hippolyte.

4304

This centaures poetis specefe,  
And Seruyus maketh menciou[n],  
How thei were whilom engendrid on a skie,  
Whan first ther fadir, callid Yrion,  
Was enamourid, ful many day agon,

4308

He also con-  
quered the cen-  
taurs, creatures  
begotten on a  
cloud by Ixion,  
Juno's  
secretary,

4275. off] in R. 4276. Excell yng] Excelsyng B.  
4279. fiance] H, R 3. 4284. Ageynst R.  
4292. theatre] tiatre R. 4293. this] the R.  
4295. made R, H. 4296. bi] om. R. 4298. Ayens R.  
4303. list iuparte] leyde in iupardie R.  
4308. on] of H, P, R 3. 4310. many a R.

Vpon Iuno, because she was so fair,  
Gouerneresse and goddesse off the hair. 4312

who fell in  
love with his  
mistress, and  
she, disdain-  
ing him, took the  
likeness of a  
cloud,  
This Yrion was hir secretarie,  
And for hir fairnesse & excellent beute,  
Loued hir ful hote, al-be she was contrarie  
To his desir, in Bochas ye may see. 4316  
Hym to delude, he writith, how that she  
Hirsilff transfourmyd, as she [that] myhte & koude,  
Into the liknesse off an heuenli cloude,

which in his  
folly he be-  
lieved to be  
her.  
This Yrion pleynli supposyng 4320  
It was hirsilff, and euene thus he wrouhte,  
The cloude enbracyng, withoute mor tarieng, —  
Off his foli the goddesse there he souhte;  
And with ther medlyng atwen hem foorth thei  
brouhte 4324

The centauris, these beestis merueilous,  
Which off nature be founde monstuous.\*

The centaurs  
were half man,  
half horse.  
They tried to  
carry away  
Pirithous' wife  
Hippodamia,  
Halff man, halff hors, [de]partid thus on  
tweyne, [p. 54]  
And wonderful bi ther descripcioun, 4328  
Off fals[e] malice dede hemselff ordeyne  
On Pirotheus to make invasioun,  
And hym to putte out off possessioun  
Off his wiff, callid Ypodamen, 4332  
And hir to rauysshe, maugre all his men.

Ther were off hem an hundred [as] in noumbre,  
Swift as the wynd in ther cours rennyng,  
Which off malice cast hem to encoumbre 4336  
Duk Pirotheus the day off his weddyng,  
And to rauysshe his wiff at ther comyng,  
Yiff for his parti ther were no diffence  
Ageyn ther power to make resistance. 4340

but Theseus  
subdued them.  
But Theseus list nat to delaie  
Pirotheus his brother to diffende.  
First the centaures he knyhtli dede outraie  
So mortalli, thei durste hym nat offende; 4344  
Afftir this conquest to helle thei descende,

4312. Gouernessee R, P, H 5.

4315. al be it R. 4320-4515.] *om.* H, fol. *missing*.

4326. monstuous] contrarious B, R 3, P — ther nature R.

4327. on] in R, J. 4328. And] A R.

4330. invasioun.] inuocacion R.

4343. knyhtly he did R, J. 4345. this] the R, be J.

Duk Pirothe and worthi Theseus,  
Maugre the daunger off cruel Cerberus.

There thei rauysshe in ther mortal teene,  
Thoruh ther knyghthod, yiff ye list to lere,  
Despiht off Pluto, Proserpyna the queene,  
Which off Iubiter was the douhter deere.  
And Pirotheus fond first the manere  
Off wilful force, thoruh his hih renoun,  
Rewmys to conquere and holde possessioun.

4348 Afterwards he  
and Pirithous  
descended into  
hell, where  
they made  
off with  
Proserpina.

4352

But bi writyng sothli off Ouyde,  
He pleyntly tellith how duk Theseus  
Arested was in hell, and muste abide,  
Bi the force off cruel Cerberus;  
And Pluto was to hym contrarious,  
Til Pirotheus, to fynden a reles,  
The cas declared onto Hercules.

4356 But Ovid says  
that Theseus  
was arrested in  
hell and kept  
there by Cer-  
berus, and  
subsequently  
rescued by  
Hercules,

4360

Which off his knyghthod a remedi fond,  
To helpe his freend [he] dede his besi peyne;  
First bi his prowesse Cerberus he bond  
At helle gatis with a treble cheyne,  
And off his manhod he dede so ordeyne,  
Duk Theseus from daunger to discharge,  
Maugre Pluto for to gon at large.

4364 who bound  
Cerberus with  
a triple chain.

4368

Thei were in armys brethre bothe tweyne,  
Louede as brethre bothe\* in werre and pes,  
That nouthur koude onto other feyne,  
Ther liff to iupart & putte hemsilff in pres.  
And bothe as brethre wer callid Hercules,  
To signefie, poetis can weel tell,  
This name in conquest all other doth excell.

Theseus and  
Pirithous were  
brothers in  
arms, and  
called  
Hercules,

4372

Bi old[e] tyme thei that were pereles  
For ther noblesse in dyuers regiouns,  
All thei for manhod wer namyd Hercules,  
Such as were noised for famous champiouns,  
Tigres to daunte, boores and leouns,  
And renommed among hem euerichon,  
Bookis afferme, that Theseus was on.

4376 a name given  
to peerless  
knights in old  
times.

4380

4350. Proserpyna R.

4363. he] *om.* J.

4370. bothe] togidre B, R 3, P (both R, J, H 5).

4371. neithir R, J. 4372. Iupardie R, J.

4382. Bookis] Bochas P, H 5 — afferme] affermeth R, J, P,  
H 5.

- Theseus brought peace to Athens, restored exiles, 4384
- First, as I saide, bi his knyhtli trauaile,  
 When Athenes stood in dyuysiou  
 A-mong hemsilff bi werre and bi bataile,  
 Bi\* his wisdam and his\* discrecioun,  
 He sette accord withynne that noble toun:  
 Them that were exilid & stood in nouncerteyn, 4388  
 He off his knyhtod made hem resorte ageyn;
- made laws and governed wisely, 4392
- He gaff hem lawes wherbi thei sholde hem gie,  
 Noble statutis foundid on resoun,  
 Sette among hem so prudent policie,  
 In ther luyng that no discencioun  
 Sholde arise bi non occasioun  
 A-mong hemsilff, in hih or low estat,  
 Proudyng euere that there were no debat. 4396
- so that the city prospered and became the first centre of knighthood and philosophy. 4400
- Thus gan the cite encrece and multeplie,  
 To wexe famous off wisdam and richesse;  
 Ther sprang the welle first off philosophie;  
 Ther first off knyhtod ros the hih noblesse,  
 Bi Theseus, Bochas bereth witnesse:  
 Thus thynges too, lik as it is founde,  
 Clergie and knyhtod dede there habounde.
- He compelled Creon to return the remains of lords slain at Thebes to their ladies. 4404
- And for to sette the cite in quieete,  
 He made pes thoruh al that regioun;  
 And off knyhtod he manli dede meete  
 The cruel tiraunt that callid was Creoun,  
 Maugre hym made restitucioun 4408  
 Off lordis bonys, that were at Thebes slayn,  
 To the ladies, wheroff thei were ful fayn.
- Theseus lived long in honour and joy, but at last Fortune turned her face away from him and threw him down from her wheel. 4412
- Thus thoruh Grece abrod his renoun spradde; [p. 55]  
 His knyhtli fame gan gretli multeplie,  
 And longe in ioie thus his liff he ladde,  
 Whil that Fortune list hym magnefie:  
 But ay hir gladnesse is meynt with sum envie,  
 For she, froward, list no mor soiourne 4416  
 With Theseus, but gan hir face tourne

4386, 7 are transposed in B. 4386. 2nd his] bi his B.

4387. He] To R.

4388. stooden R.

4391. founde R — on] of J.

4397. bigan R, J. 4403. knyhtod] lawe J, H 5, lowe R.

4404. And] om. R, J. 4412. began R, bigan J.

4417. began R, J, H 5.



Away from hym, wex peruers and froward,  
 Off his glorie\* ongoodli gan to dulle,  
 Doun from hir wheel she made [him] go bakward, 4420  
 Off his good fame she gan the fethres pulle;  
 Whan his noblesse was hiest at the fulle —  
 I meene the fulle off his felicitye —  
 Ther folwed an ebbe off gret aduersite. 4424

And, morouer, hir frowardli to quite,  
 His onhappis rehersyng on bi on, After he had  
slain the  
Minotaur  
 On the firste, as Bochas list endite,  
 Was whan he lay in Crete among his fon, 4428  
 And out off prisoun sholde into Grece gon,  
 Repeiryng homward & hymself withdrawe,  
 The Mynotaur whan he hadde slawe.

The firste emprise that he vndirtook, 4432  
 Was whan he scaped thymportable peyne  
 Off Mynotaurus, lik as seith my book, and deserted  
Ariadne, who  
saved his life,  
 And with hym ladde the kyngis douhtren tweyne,  
 That he off malice falsli list disdeyne 4436  
 Geyn Adriane, which that dede hym saue  
 From the deth, whan he lay in the caue.

Sholde ha be slayn, hadde nat hir socour be, —  
 In his repair he took theroff non heed; 4440 and married  
Phædra,  
 He lefte hir sool\* in gret aduersite  
 Withynne an yle, in myscheeff, sorwe & dreded.  
 And fair[e] Phedra with hym he dede leed,  
 Weddid hir, lik a forswore man: 4444  
 Thus with ontrouthe his myscheeff first began.

How Phedra quit hir, — the story is weel knowe — Phædra fell in  
love with Hip-  
polytus, who  
 In his absence, Bochas writith thus,  
 Whan that she, withynne a litil throwe, 4448  
 Loued ageyn kynde his sone Ypolitus;  
 But he to hire was contrariȳs,

4419. gloire B — gan to dulle] be gan to double R, gan to double J.

4420. him] om. R, J, P, R 3, H 5.

4421. fame she gan] name she bigan R, J. 4422. the] om. J.

4425. to aquyte R, J. 4427. to endite R, J.

4433. escapid R, J. 4435. ladde] hadde R, had J.

4437. Geyn] Ayens R, Ayenst J.

4441. sool] soul B, alone H 5.

4446. hir] om. R — knowe] om. R, coupe J.

4449. his] hir J, P, H 5.

- Nolde [not] assente to so foul a deede;  
 For shame he fledde, & parcel eek for dreede, 4452
- was killed, as  
 you have al-  
 ready seen. To his fader for she hym dede\* accuse,  
 As ye toforn ha[ue] the story sayn.  
 And for he dede hir cumpany refuse,  
 He wente his way & cam neuer agayn; 4456  
 For ye haue herd[e] how that he was slayn  
 Withynne a char, thoruh his vnhappi chaunce,  
 And how Phedra throuh myscheeff & vengauce
- She then slew  
 herself; and all  
 this Theseus  
 believed to be  
 a punishment  
 for his deserting  
 Ariadne. Slouh hirselff, ageyn al womanheed — 4460  
 Heer in this book toforn as I you tolde.  
 Of which[e] thyng, whan Theseus took heed,  
 Thouhte it was vengauce for his offencis olde;  
 For he nat quit hym lik as he was holde 4464  
 To Adriane, which sholde ha been his wiff,  
 Bi whos socour he scaped with the liff.
- This infortune\* and this vnhappi chaunce  
 Was to his noblesse ful contrarious. 4468  
 The deth also was to hym\* a vengauce  
 Off his sone callid Ypolitus,  
 For sorwe off whom, this duk Theseus  
 With salte teris sore gan compleyne 4472  
 At the exequies off these ilke tweyne.
- He wept bitter  
 tears at their  
 funeral and  
 was sorely  
 grieved when  
 Pirithous was  
 slain by Cer-  
 berus. I trowe also it dede hym sorẽ greue,  
 Duk Pirotheus whan he sauh li ded,  
 Slayn with a beeste, & myht[e] nat releue, — 4476  
 Kyng Orchus hound, which hadde a treble hed,  
 Whos teth horrible off his blood were red.  
 Which infortunye, whan he gan beholde,  
 Onto the deth he felte his herte colde. 4480
- His greatest  
 sorrow was that  
 he gave cred-  
 ence to Phædra, And for to rekne the grete wrechidnessis,  
 Thunhappi chaunces that fill hym in his liff,  
 Amongis alle his other gr̃et distressis,  
 Was non so mortal nor so ful off striff 4484  
 As whan that he gaff credence to his wiff,
4451. not] *om.* R 3. 4452. eek] also R.  
 4453. hym dede] dede hym B.  
 4456. his way] away R, J, P, H 5.  
 4464. holde] beholde R, J. 4466. the] his R.  
 4467. infortune] Infortunye B. 4469. to hym was also B.  
 4472. bigan R, bigan to pleyne J.  
 4473. At] And R, J — these] the R, þe J.  
 4475. sauh li] sih be R, siþe be J. 4479. infortune R, J.  
 4484. nor] ne J.

Phedra callid, which off entencioun  
Compassid ontreuli an accusacioun

Vpon Ypolitus, off hatreed and envie,  
Because he nolde do so gret offence  
As for tassente to hir lecherie;  
Therefore off deth he felte the violence.  
And for his fader to soone gaff credence,  
Bochas forbit husbondis al ther lyues,  
Withoute preeff, nat leue to soone her wyues,

4488 and for this  
reason Bochas  
forbids hus-  
bands to be-  
lieve what  
their wives tell  
them unless  
there be proof.

Nor be [to] hasti talis for to leue  
Off flaterers in chaumbre nor at table;  
Forgers of lesyngis, myn auctour doth weel preeue,  
Tabide with lordis that thei be nat able.  
Heeron he maketh a chapitle ful notable,  
And off his writyng, this was the cause whi:  
That pryncis sholde examyne ech parti,

[p. 56] and advises us  
not to be  
hasty to be-  
lieve tales of  
any sort.

Off wisdam also and off discrecioun,  
Withoute a preeff nat be parciall;  
For to a prynce it is confusioun,  
Yiff atween parties he be nat founde egall,  
Causid many on for to haue a fall;  
God suffred such nat longe to contune,\*  
Withdrouh ther grace & hyndred ther fortune.

4500  
A prince must  
be equally just  
to all men,  
otherwise God  
will punish  
him as he did  
Theseus,

Thus Theseus for his hastynesse,  
His happ, his grace discrecid day be day,  
The fame appallid off his worthynesse,  
And froward Fortune in a-wait eek lay,  
For his diffautis to hyndre hym yiff she may;  
Caste she wolde his noblesse disauaunce.  
And thanne his kyngdam bi disobeisaunce

4512

From hym withdrouh honour and reuerence,  
Ful frowardli thoruh al his regioun.  
Thei off Athenys, bi cruel violence,  
Fill ageyn hym in\* rebellioun,  
That he was fayn to fleen out off the toun:

4516 whose subjects  
rebelled and  
finally drove  
him out of  
his kingdom.

4520

4485. whan that] was whan R, J — he] om. J.

4486. off] an R, J. 4489. he] om. J.

4490. to assente J — vnto R. 4494. her] om. J.

4495. leue] heere R, here J, H 5. 4496. nor] ne J.

4505. betwene R, J. 4507. continue B, contynue H 5.

4509. hastifnesse J. 4510. discrecid] distressid J.

4512. in a-wait eek] also in a wayte R, J.

4516. H begins again. 4519. in] in a B, R 3.

Thus hath Fortune dirked the brihtnesse  
Off al his nobley, and cast hym in distresse.

This was the eende bi gret contrariouste  
Off Theseus, afftir his daies glade, 4524  
Whan the fressh floures off old felicite,  
Fortune aduerse made hem for to fade;  
Ech thyng mut bowwe whan it is ouer-lade,  
Worshepis & honouris, whan thei brihttest shyne, 4528  
With vnwar chaunges than rathest doun declyne.

## [Lenvoy.]

The prosperity  
of princes is  
subject to  
sudden change;

THE onseur gladnesse, the ioie *transitorie*,\*  
Thunstable seurnesse, the\* *transmutaciouns*,  
The cloudi brihtnesse, the fals eclipsid glorie 4532  
Off ertly pryncis which han possessiouns,  
Monarchies and dominaciouns —  
Ther sodeyn chaung declareth to vs all,  
Ther pompous sugre is meynt with bittir gall. 4536

Fortuna can  
take from them  
their crowns  
and sceptres,

This blynde goddess in hir consistorie,\*  
With hir plesaunce medlith discenciouns,  
Afftir tryumphes, conquest and victorie,  
Reueth fro pryncis ther sceptres & ther crouns, 4540  
Troubleth the peeple with fals rebellious:  
Seeth bi these dukis, which from her wheel be fall,  
Al worldli sugre is meynt with bittir gall.

as this tragedy  
shews.

This tragedie maketh a memorie\* 4544  
Off dukis tweyne, & off ther hih renouns;  
And off ther loue writ a gret historie,  
And how thei conquered dyuers regiouns,  
Gouerned cites, contres and eek touns, 4548  
Til Fortune ther prowessee dede appall,  
To shewe ther sugre was\* meynt with bittir gall.

4525. flour R.

4529. doun] doth R. 4530, 32. transitoire, gloire B.

4531. the] ther B. 4534. Monarchies] & monarchies H.

4537, 39. consistoire, victoire B.

4540. fro pryncis] from kyngis R — 2nd ther] the R.

4541. Troubleth] & troublith H.

4542. her] per R.

4543. bittir] sum R.

4544, 46. memoire, histoire B.

4544. a] om. R. 4548. eek] also R.

4550. was] is B — menged R 3 — bittir] sum R, J, H 5.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, seeth how deceptorie \*  
 Been alle these worldli reuoluciouns, 4552  
 And how Fortune in hir reclynatorie,  
 With hir triacle tempreth fals poisouns:  
 So merueilous been hir confecciouns,  
 Off frowardnesse she will, what-so be-fall, 4556  
 Ay with hir sugre off custum tempre gall.

Princes, Prin-  
 cesses, remem-  
 ber that For-  
 tune always  
 tempers her  
 sugar with  
 gall.

¶ Here Bochas repreuyth all thunstableines of  
 Princis & opir persones þat zeve hasti credence  
 to euery report with-out preef.<sup>1</sup>

ALTHOUGH so be, in eueri maner age  
 Folkis be dyuers off condiciouns,  
 To turne, plie & chaunge in ther corage, 4560  
 On outhr parti with sodeyn mocionis,  
 And for to bowe\* bi transmutaciouns  
 With eueri wynd, as doon thunstable leuys,  
 Which hange on trees in forestis and in greuys. 4564

People are  
 constantly  
 changing in  
 their hearts.

But off alle chaungis, that chaung is most to dreede,  
 And most feerful is that variaunce,  
 Whan that pryncis, which may the peeple leede,  
 Be founde vnstable in ther gouernaunce: 4568  
 For ther noblesse and ther hih puissaunce  
 Assureth hem, bi a maner [of] fourme,  
 What-euer hem list taccomplisshe and parfourme.

but the worst  
 change is when  
 princes are  
 unstable;

To comoun profit thei may most auaille, [p. 57] 4572  
 Whan thei be reulid bi wisdom and resoun;  
 And to the peeple thei may most disauaille,  
 Whan thei lakke wit and discrecioun:  
 Thus atwen tweyne, in eueri region, 4576

for their sub-  
 jects are apt  
 to follow their  
 example.

4551, 53. deceptoire, reclynatoire B. 4556. wole so what R.  
 4557. Ay] Euere R. <sup>1</sup> The heading in J is as follows: "Here  
 Bochas writeth ayenst hem that yeueth hasty credence to  
 liers and flaterers," MS. J. leaf 24 recto. The following  
 heading is in R: "In this capitle Bochas repreueth | And  
 blameth nat oonly princis | All hem that ouerlihtly yeueth  
 credence | To euery tale & fable which is." In J, written as  
 an ordinary stanza: "In this Chapitle Bochas in sentence | Re-  
 preueþ and blameþ not oonly princes | But all hem þat ouer-  
 lightly [g]eueþ credence | To euery tale and fable whiche is |  
 Reported vn to hem [break in handwritting] for sothfastnesse |  
 And list nothyng do as it were dewe | To prove the trouth  
 where it be fals or trewe."

4562. bowve B. 4565. This stanza is marked as in approval R 3.  
 4570. of] om. R 3. 4576. betwene R.

The peeples draweth, who that can discerne,  
To good or badde, as pryncis hem gouerne.

Princes must  
not be hasty of  
judgment

Thei may nat be to hasti nor sodeyne,  
But doon all thyng bi good auysement, 4580  
Keepe hem from tunges that parted been on tweyne,  
Nat be to rakill to yiue no iugement,  
And off no folkis, whan thei been absent,  
Leue no talis nor yiue no credence, 4584  
Till that the parti may come to audience.

or listen to  
tales too  
readily. Hasty  
credence is far  
worse than  
slowness of  
belief.

Sumwhile hath happid, how that slouh credence  
Hath in sum cas be founde ful noious;  
But hasti credence, I dar sey in sentence, 4588  
A thousand fold is more pereilous;  
For onauysid al haste is odious:  
For haste ful offte, for lakkyng off resoun,  
Off moch[e] peeples hath be destruccioun. 4592

Nothing indeed  
is more to  
be dreaded.

There is no damage that men can purpose,  
Mor to be drad nor mor lamentable,  
Than a prynce his eris to onclose  
To eueri tale and to eueri fable; 4596  
It is a tokne ther hertis be nat stable,  
Whan thei to flatereris ther eris do\* applie,  
Namli to such that can weel forge and lie.

Some people  
are false, some  
are honourable;

Folkis be dyuers, summe fals and summe trewe, 4600  
In dyuers studies doon ther besynesse;  
Summe can studie to fynde out talis newe,  
And summe for lucre can meyntene weel falsnesse  
And holde up quarelis ageyn[e]s rihtwisnesse, 4604  
Pretendyng trouthe vnder a fals entent  
To hyndre folkis which that been innocent.

it were folly  
to think they  
should all be  
alike;

Men to suppose it were a gret foli,  
That folkis sholde in ther oppynyoun 4608  
Speke or pronounce alle on o parti,  
Or holde o weie in ther entencioun;  
For semblabli as there is dyuysioun

4579. nor] ne to R.

4584. nor] neithir R.

4586. Sumwhile] Sumtyme R.

4587. cas] om. R.

4594. nor] ne R. 4596. 2nd to] om. R.

4598. ther] thei R — do] so B, done R. 4599. forge] om. R.

4600. and] om. R. 4607. to] doe P.

4611. a dyuysioun R, J, H 5, P.



- Off\* corages, off hih or low degre, 4612  
 So is ther treuli a gret dyuersite
- In rehersaile or report off a thyng,  
 For to his parti ech man is fauourable:  
 Sum man can sey weel in his rehersyng, 4616 therefore a  
 Sum man is double, & sum man deceyuable, prince ought to  
 Sum men sey trouthe, and summe be variable; examine well  
 Wherefore a prynce off riht, as it doth seeme, before he de-  
 Sholde weel examyne afforn or that he deeme. 4620 livers his  
 judgment.
- For there is noon mor dreedful pestilence  
 Than a tunge that can flatre and fage;  
 For with his cursid crabbid violence  
 He enfectith folk\* off eueri maner age. 4624 Woe to  
 Wo to tungenes froward off ther language, flattering,  
 And wo to tungenes fals, furious and wood, lying,  
 Which off no persone neuer can sey good. slanderous  
 tongues!
- Bochas rehersith, it is riht weel sitting 4628 Bochas says  
 That eueri man other do comende, we should  
 And sey the beste alwey in reportyng; always speak  
 For in weel-seieng may no man offende. well of one  
 Where men sey weel, God will his grace sende; 4632 another,
- Affir men been, men mut the pris vpreise,  
 Lich ther merit is allowe hem or dispreise.
- But wher a thyng is vtirli onknowe,  
 Lat no man ther been hasti off sentence; 4636 and where we  
 For rihtful iuges sitting on a rowe, have no knowl-  
 Off ther wisdam and off ther hih prudence edge, we  
 Will of trouthe haue first sum euydence — should be  
 I meene such as gouerned be bi grace — slow to  
 Or any doom forbi ther lippis pace. 4640 judge.
- A prynce sholde assemble thyngis tweyne  
 Withynne hymself: [afforn] ful prudently  
 Shet up his doomys betwixe, lokkis tweyne, 4644 A prince should  
 On off the soule, resoun for that party, always decide  
 Prudence chose out, and riht for the body; according to  
 reason and  
 right, and take  
 truth and con-  
 science to  
 counsel.

4612. Off] In B — off] in H.

4615. to] om. H. 4616. in] in all R. 4618. seyth R.

4622. flatre] flaterie R — in red in margin, MS. J. 24 c: nota.  
de falsis linguis.

4624. infectith R — folkis B, folkes R 3 — maner] om. J.

4626. furious] froward H.

4628. it is riht weel] as it is wele R. 4629. eueri] eueure R.

4631. no man may R, J. 4641. forth bi R — ther] the H.

4643. afforn] om. H. 4644. betwixt R. 4645. soule] sone R.

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And atween bothe, or he yiue a sentence,  
To counsell calle trouthe and good conscience. 4648

He should first  
find out  
whether the  
accuser proceeds  
honestly,

First to considre with eueri circumstance,  
Dilligentli doon theron his labour,  
Off discrecioun to take the ballaunce,  
And first weie out who is thaccusour, 4652  
And whethir that he for falsnesse or fauour  
In his processe list for to procede;  
Heroff a prynce must off riht take heede.

and if he is a  
friend or enemy  
of the accused  
and a man of  
good or bad  
report.

He muste also considre bi and bi, [p. 58] 4656  
What that he is, which is to hym accusid,  
And whethir thaccusour be freend or enmy,  
Or whethir he shal been accepte\* or refusid  
In his accus — this muste affor be musid — 4660  
And whethir he be, bi report off his name,  
A man weel noised or sclaudrid bi diffame.

If Theseus had  
done this, he  
would not have  
caused his son's  
death;

Yiff Theseus hadde be thus auysed,  
And considred off resoun the maner, 4664  
He hadde nat so hastili deuysed  
His sonys deth, lich as ye shal ler:  
For yiff ther hadde assemblid been I-feer  
In his persone prudence and resoun, 4668  
He sholde ha[ue] seyn in his discrecioun,

for, as Bochas  
says, women are  
born liars and  
sometimes talk  
too much.

Be knowlechyng off long expèience,  
Off his wiff the gret onstedfastnesse,  
Which thoruh hir froward compassid eloquence 4672  
Was redi euere to brynge folk in distresse,  
As in his wrytyng Bochas berth witnesse,  
Off ther nature women can flatre and fage,  
And been sumwhile to copious off language. 4676

Also off wisdam, this duk Theseus  
Shold ha[ue] considred afforn in his entent,  
How that his sone, callid Ypolitus,

4647. bitwene hem both R.

4650. And diligently R — theron] ther R. 4654. for] om. R.

4659. he] that he R — accept] acceptid B and other MSS.  
except H 5 which has accepte.

4660. accus] actis J, H 5 — this] he P, thus H 5.

4663. thus had been J, R, H 5.

4672. hir] his R. 4673. in] to R.

4676. sum tyme R — to copious off] copious of ther R.

4677. this] om. R.

Off al onclennesse was founde ay innocent;  
And how that he off custum made his went  
Into forestis duryng his yong age,  
To hunte at beestis which that were sauage.

4680 Theseus should  
have remem-  
bered that his  
son was a  
hunter

Rennyng on foote, as ye shal vndirstonde,  
On hillis, valis teschewen idilnesse,  
Mooder off viciis, with his bowe in honde,  
Diane to serue off huntyng cheeff goddesse.  
Sumtyme to hauke he dede his besynesse;  
Eek onto fisshyng he gretly was applied,  
So that his youthe was neuer onocupied.

4684

4688

Thus he lyued in wodis solitarie,  
And off Venus despised the seruyse;  
A-mong[es] women he wolde neuer tarie,  
Ther felashipp he dede alwey despise:  
For he dempte, be sentence off the wise,  
Who touchith pich, bassay men may see,\*  
It failith nat he shal defouled be.

4692

who despised  
the society of  
women

4696

Ypolitus sauh weel this thyng afforn,  
Kept hym at large from such contrariouste;  
His greene youthe he wolde nat haue it lorn,  
To be diffoulid for lak off chastite:  
For he lyued euer in virgynyte,  
And neuer dede, Bochas wil nat varie,  
Nothyng that was onto God contrarie.

4700

and always re-  
mained chaste.

4704

Thus off entent he kepte his bodi cleene  
Duryng his liff, bothe in thouht & deede,  
Whos mooder was Ypolita the queene  
Off Amazones, in Ouyde ye may reede.  
But, o allas, that Theseus took heede,  
For a tale off Phedra ful off gile,  
Withoute gilt his sone to exile.

His mother  
was Hippolyte;

4708

Afftir whos deth[e], summe<sup>e</sup> poetis seyn,  
How that Diana, for his chastite,  
Restorid hym onto lyue ageyn  
Bi Esculapius, and gaff hym liberte  
In hir forestis to huntun and go fre.

4712

and after his  
death Diana  
restored him  
to life and  
gave him leave  
to hunt in her  
forests forever.

4716

4680. ay] euer R. 4686. in] on H, J, H 5.

4689. Eek] Also R — gretly he was R. 4692. dispised R.

4694. alwey] euer H, euer P, euer R 3.

4696. Who] Who so R, J — see] weel see B — In MS. J. in red  
in margin: Qui tangit picem &c.

4698. seeh R — beforne H. 4707. was] om. H.

For which restoryng, as writ Ouidius,  
As twies a man, men callid hym Virbius.

Bochas here  
makes a great  
outcry against  
women and  
says that they  
are deceitful by  
nature and like  
insatiable beasts.

¶ Heer Bochas makith an exclamacion a-geyn the  
pride of vommen And thonseurnes of princes.

**B**UT Bochas heer, I not what he doth meene,  
Maketh in his book an exclamacioun 4720  
Ageyn[e]s women, that pite is to seene —  
Seith how ther lyne, ther generacioun  
Been off nature double off condicioun,  
And callith hem eek dyuers and onstable, 4724  
Beestis rassembleyng that been insaciable.

Of course he  
means only the  
women of Crete,  
for the women  
of this country  
are very differ-  
ent.

He meneth off women that be born in Crete,  
Nothyng off hem that duelle in this contre:  
For women heer, al doubilnesse thei lete, 4728  
And ha[ue] no tech off mutabilite,  
Thei loue no chaungis nor no duplicite;  
For ther husbondis, in causis smal or grete,  
What-euer thei seyn, thei can nat countirplete. 4732

Blessed  
be God, who  
made them so  
humble and  
patient. I  
don't mean  
one, but all,  
as their hus-  
bands can  
testify;

Blessid be God, that hath hem maad so meek, [p. 59]  
So humble and feithful off ther condiciouns;  
For thouth men wolde cause\* and mater seek  
Ageyn ther pacience to fynde occasiouns, 4736  
Thei han refusid al contradicciouns,  
And hem submittid thoruh ther gouernaunce,  
Onli to meeknesse and womanli suffraunce.

I speke off alle, I speke nat off on, 4740  
That be professid onto lowlynesse;  
Thei may ha[ue] mouthes, but language ha[ue] thei non:  
Alle trewe husbondis can bern heroff witnesse;  
For weddid men, I dar riht weel expresse, 4744  
That haue assaied and had experience,  
Best can recorde off wifli pacience.

4718. callid] call R — *between this line and the next the following note in red, MS J. 25 a: "Nota de transformatis i bis vii."*  
4722. Seith] Seeth H — 2nd ther] the H. 4724. eek] also R.  
4726. women] them H. 4727. hem that is muddled in R.  
4729. tech] tache R. 4734. feithful] feerdful R.  
4735. cause] causes B, R 3 P, H — mateers H.  
4743. heroff] per of R.  
4744. riht] ful R.

For as it longeth to men to be sturdy,  
 And sumwhat froward as off ther nature,  
 Riht so can women suffre patiently,  
 And alle wrongis humbl[el]i endure.  
 Men sholde attempte no maner creature,  
 A[nd] namli women, ther meeknesse for to preue, 4752  
 Which may weel suffre whil no man doth hem greue.

4748 for, unlike  
 men, they  
 suffer all  
 wrongs in  
 humility.

Eueri thyng resortith to his kynde,  
 As Bochas writith, *sum* tyme off the yeer;  
 And yit, who serchith, bi processe he shal fynde 4756  
 That trouthe and vertu may neuer fade off cheer:  
 For rihtwisnesse will alwey shyne cleer;  
 Trouthe & falsnesse, in what thei ha[ue] to doone,  
 Thei may no while assemble in o persone. 4760

Truth and  
 falseness are  
 never found  
 together in one  
 person,

Feith and flatrie, thei be so contrarie,  
 Thei may togidre holde no soiour;  
 Nor symplesse, which that can nat varie,  
 May neuer accorde with a baratour, 4764  
 Nor innocence with a losengour,  
 Nor chastite can nat hirsilff applie  
 Hir to confourme onto [no] ribaudie.

or good faith  
 and flattery,  
 simplicity in a  
 boaster or  
 chastity in a  
 ribald.

Crafft and nature sue the professioun 4768  
 Bi thordynaunce set in ther courage;  
 And ech man folweth his condicioun,  
 As off the stok the frut hath his tarage:  
 Pilgrymes may gon ful ferr in ther passage, 4772  
 But I dar seyn, how ferr that euer thei go,  
 Ther bit sum tarage off that that thei cam fro.

Each man lives  
 according to  
 his character.

Bochas maketh an introduccioun  
 In this chapitle, off the hih noblesse 4776  
 That pryncis han in ther possessioun;  
 And bi a maner lawhhyng dloth expresse,  
 How for to sette hem in gret sekirnesse,

Bochas laughs  
 at those  
 princes who  
 have sergeants  
 waiting upon  
 them and  
 soldiers

4747. it] *om.* R. 4750. humbyleth R.

4753. doth] *do* P, H 5.

4755. as write Boch. H.

4759. &] *om.* R. 4761. so] *om.* R.

4762. may not R — no] *om.* R. 4763, 65. Nor] Neithir R.

4768. MS. J. 25 b *in red between the lines*: "Ars mutat naturam."

4771. his] the R. 4774. 2nd that] *om.* R.

4775. Bochas maketh] Makith here bochas R.

4776. the] *om.* R.

4778. lawhhyng] louthyng R — doth] *om.* H.



Thei han sergauntis vpon hem abidyng,  
And men off armys day and nyht waityng. 4780

to keep people  
from approach-  
ing them.

That no man entre, but yiff he ha[ue] licence,  
The froward porteris stondyng at the gate  
Putte men a-bak be sturdi violence; 4784

It were ful hard ageyn hem to debate,  
Ther wachchis kept erli and eek late;  
And hem tassure a-nyhtis whil thei slepe,  
The chaumberleyns ther dorys streihtli keepe. 4788

They are  
watched  
over day and  
night by serv-  
ants, their  
food and drink  
are tasted for  
them, they live  
in suspicion and  
fear.

Men assigned ther metis to assaie,  
To taste ther wynes, list ther were tresoun;  
Such mortal dreed these lordis doth affraie;  
So is ther seurnesse meynt with suspeciou[n]: 4792  
Who fedith hym gladli, that ferith hym off poisoun?  
But pore folk frau[n]chised from such dreed,  
[With] such as God sent meryly\* thei hem feed.

Poor people are  
free from such  
dread. The  
highest estates  
have least peace  
of mind.

But poetis that write tragedies, 4796  
Ther compleynyng is al off hih estatis,  
Rehersyng euer ther pitous iuparties,  
Ther sodeyn chaungis & ther woful fatis,  
Ther dyuysiouns and ther mortal debatis, 4800  
And ay conclude ther dites, who can reede,  
Hiest estatis stonde ay most in dreede.

Of all this  
liars and flat-  
terers are the  
cause, and worst  
of all is when  
princes believe  
what they say.

And ground & roote off al thi[s] mortal trouble,  
As writ Bochas and pley[n]li berth witnesse, 4804  
Been these lieres with ther tungen double,  
Themsilff afforcyng ay trouthe to oppresse;  
With whom flatrie is a cheeff maistresse:  
And, werst off all, to ther dreedful sentence, 4808  
Is whan pryncis been hasti off credence.

Hasty credence  
is the source of  
great sorrow.

Hasti credence is roote off al errour,  
A froward stepmooder off al good counsail,  
Ground off gret hyndryng, a dreedful deceyuour, 4812

4780. sergauntis] seruauntis R, J, H 5.

4781. waityng] awaityng H, R, P, H 5.

4782. entre] may entre R. 4786. eek] also R.

4787. a-nyhtis] on nyhtis R — whil] whan R.

4790. wynes is altered into wyffes R.

4795. With] om. R, J, H 5 — sent] hem sent R, J, them sent  
H 5 — meryly] with merthe (mirthe) B, J, R, H 5.

4798. Rehersyng] Rewerdyng R.

4800. 2nd ther] om. H. 4801. ay] euer R.

4806. afforcyng] ay forshyng R.



Fair offte off face, with a ful pereilous tail,  
 Gladli concludyng with ful gret disauail,  
 Next neyh[e]bour onto repentaunce  
 To all that truste & haue in hir plesaunce.

4816

## ¶ Lenvoye.

**P**RYNCIS, considreth, how in eueri age  
 Folkis be dyuers off ther condicioun  
 To plie & turne & chaunge in ther corage;  
 Yit is ther non, to myn opynyoun,  
 So dreedful chaung nor transmutacioun,  
 As chaung off pryncis to yiue a iugement,  
 Or hasti credence, withoute aisement.

[p. 60]

Princes, the  
 most dreadful  
 thing you can  
 do is to  
 deliver a hasty  
 judgment.

4820

It is weel founde a passyng gret damage,  
 Knowe and expert in eueri regioun,  
 Thouh a tale haue a fair visage,  
 It may include ful gret decepcioun:  
 Hid vndir sugre, galle and fell poisoun,  
 With a fresh face off double entendement —  
 Yit yiueth no credence withoute aisement.

4824

A story may  
 look well, yet  
 be wholly false.

4828

Let folkis alle be war off ther language,  
 Keep ther tungen from oblocucioun,  
 To hyndre or hurte bi ño maner outrage,  
 Preserue ther lippis from al detraccioun,  
 Fro chaumpartie and contradiccioun;  
 For list that fraude wer founde in ther entent,  
 Ne yiueth no credence withoute aisement.

4832

Beware of  
 speaking ill of  
 others,

4836

Pryncis, Pryncessis, off noble and hih parage,  
 Which ha[ue] lordshipe and domynacioun,  
 Voide hem a-side, that can flatre and fage;  
 Fro tungen that haue a tarage off tresoun,  
 Stoppith your eris from ther bittir soun;  
 Beth circumspect, nat hasti but prudent,  
 And yiueth no credence withoute aisement.

4840

and above all  
 avoid liars and  
 flatterers.

4844

4813. offte] *om.* R — ful] *om.* R. 4814. disseivaille R.

4817. Pryncessis considre R.

4819. & chaunge in ther] *in* ther & chaunge R.4821. nor] *ne* R. 4822. a] *om.* R. 4829. entendent R.

4830. yiueth] yeue R.

4832. allocucion R. 4833. maner of R.

4838. parage] Corage H.

[Off Quene Althea, and how Hercules by women  
was brouht to confusioun.]<sup>1</sup>

Bochas, turning  
again to those  
who had been  
cast down by  
Fortune,

WHAN Bochas hadde shewed his sentence,

And declared his opynyoun

Geyn hem that wer[e]n hasty off credence,

He gan anon make a digressioun

4848

Fro that mater, and off entencioun

To serche out mo, his purpos to contune,\*

That were down cast & hyndred bi Fortune.

saw among a  
large company  
of worthies  
Queen Althæa  
weeping, with  
torn and dis-  
ordered hair,

And, as he thouhte, he sauh a cumpanye

4852

Off many worthi, which to hym dede appeere;

And a-mong alle first he dede espie

Queen Althea, as she gan neihhe hym neere,

Al bedewed hir face and eek hir cheere

4856

With salt[e] teris, that pite was to seene,

Which whilom was off Calidonye\* the queene.

She was the douhter off kyng Testius,

Weddid to Oene off Calidoynes\* kyng,

4860

Off cheer and face apperyng ful pitous,

and clad in a  
ragged black  
gown.

Hir her to-torn and frowardli liggyng;

And in tokne also off compleynyng,

As writ Bochas, wheroff he took [good] heed,

4864

Blak was hir habite, and al to-rent hir weed.

A sone she hadde, Mell[e]ager he hihte;

In erthe was ther non fairere for to see,

Riht weel fauoured in euery manys sihte;

4868

And, as I fynde, at his natyuite

Present wern the Fatal Sustren thre

With ther rokke, and gan to spyne faste,

She had a son  
called Meleager,  
and at his  
birth the Fates  
cast a brand  
into the fire,  
and said that  
when it was  
consumed the  
child would die.

And took a brond and into fir it caste.

4872

And in that hour this was her language:

"Touchyng this child, we ful accorded be,

And han disposid the terme eek off his age,

4847. Geyn] Ayens R. 4850. contune] contynue B.

4852. he sauh] hym seeh R.

4856. bedewed] be wepid R — eek] also R.

4857. was] is H.

4858. whilom] sum tyme R — Calidonye] Calcidonye B, H 5,  
Calcydonye J, Calcidon R 3 — the] om. H.

4859. Thestius P.

4860. Calidoynes] Calcidoyne B, Calcydonye J, Calcidonye H 5.

4864. he] I H. 4866. Melliager R, Mellager H, R 3.

4871. rokke and gan] rokkis and bigan R.

4873. in] into R.

4875. the terme eek] also the terme R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 25 verso.

The space concludid off his destyne,  
As long[e] tyme, who-so list to see,  
Til this brond among the coles rede  
Be ful consumed into asshes dede." 4876

But whan Althea espied ther entente,  
And conseyued the fyn off ther sentence, 4880 But Althea  
She ros hire up, and the brond she hente extinguished the  
Out off the fir with gret dilligence, flame and put  
Queynt anon the fires violence; the brand  
The doom off Parcas she gan thus disobeie, away under lock  
The brond reseruyng vnder lok and keie. 4884 and key.

Touchyng the fader off this Mell[e]ager,  
Oeneus, off hym thus I reede, 4888 Meleager's  
How he wente and souhte nyh and fer reward made  
Goddis and goddessis, who-so list take heede, offerings to all  
In hope onli for to ha[ue] gret meede; the gods and  
For to hem alle, poetis thus deuise, goddesses ex-  
Sauf to Diana, he dede sacrefise. 4892 cept Diana, who  
in anger sent a  
boar to devas-  
tate his land,

Wheroff she cauhte an indignacioun;  
Caste she wolde on hym auengid be;  
Sente a boor into his regioun, 4896  
Ful sauage and ful off cruelte,  
Which deuoured the frut off many a tre  
And destroyed his cornys and his vynes,  
That such scarsete off vitaille and off wynes 4900

Was in his land vpon euery side, [p. 61]  
That the peeple off necessite  
Compellid wern a-mong hem to prouide 4904 which was killed  
Sum mene weie to saue ther contre. by Meleager.

And at the laste thei condescendid be,  
That Mell[e]ager, lusti off his corage,  
Shold chese with hym folk fresh & yong off age,  
This dreedful boor myhtili fenchace. 4908

And foorth thei wente, echon deuoid off dreed,  
With rounde speris thei gan hym to manace,  
But Mell[e]ager made first his sides red,  
And with a suerd[e] thanne smet off his hed; 4912

4879. aspiede R.

4882. hire] *om.* R, J, H 5.

4888. Oeneus H. 4889] How that he souht nyh & fer R.

4899. distried R. 4900. vitailles R. 4903. hem] *om.* R.

4905. thei] the R. 4906. his] *om.* R. 4907. fressh folkis R.

4910. began R. 4911. red] bleede H.

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Wheroff the contre was ful glad & fayn,  
And in this wise the tusshi boor was slayn.

Some books  
say that Ata-  
lanta wounded  
the boar first,  
with an arrow,

Summe bookis telle off this huntyng,  
That a ladi, which was born in Arge, 4916  
Callid Athalanta, douhter to the kyng,  
To sle this boor took on hire the charge,  
And with an arwe made his wounde large.  
Eek in Ouide lik as it is founde, 4920  
Because that she gaff the firste wounde,

and Meleager,  
her chosen  
knight, gave  
her its head,  
and when his  
two uncles took  
it from her by  
force, he slew  
them.

Mell[e]ager anon for a memorie,  
As he that was hir owne chose knyht,  
Gaff hir the hed in tokne off this victorie. 4924  
But his tweyne vncles, ageyn al skile & riht,  
Rafft hir the hed, off verray force & myht,  
Hauyng despiht that she, in ther auys,  
Off this victorie sholde bere away the prys. 4928

With which iniurie Mell[e]ager was wroth,  
And ageyn hem proudli gan disdeyne;  
Pullith out a suerd and vpon hem he goth,  
And thoruh his manhod slouh his vncles tweyne, 4932  
And afftir that dede his besi peyne  
To take the hed, and with ful humble entente,  
To Athalante ageyn it to presente.

When Althæa  
heard of this  
she grew pale

On off his vncles was callid Flexippus, 4936  
A manli knyht, and but yong off age;  
The tother brother named Thesysus.  
But whan ther suster herde off this outrage,  
How thei were slayn, she gan in hir visage 4940  
Wexe ded [&] pale, allas, for lak off blood,  
Whan she espied the cause how it stood.

and began to  
consider the  
love she bore  
her brothers and  
her son's hasty  
deed.

She hadde no mater, God wot, to be fayn,  
Queen Althea, to stonden and beholde 4944  
Hir brethre tweyne off hir sone slayn  
At the huntyng, off which toforn I tolde.  
First thyngis too she gan peise & onfolde:

4914. tusshi] tuskys R, tuskys J.  
4915. Summe] And some H, P, And som R 3.  
4919. woundis R. 4920. Eek] Also R.  
4926. Rafft] berauht H. 4927. ther] his R.  
4930. bigan R. 4931. Pullid R. 4932. he slouh R.  
4936. callid] namyd H. 4937. and] om. R.  
4938. Theseus H, R. 4942. aspied R.  
4944. to] sto R (blunder of scribe). 4947. too] tweyne R.

Off hir brethre the loue and nyh kenrede, 4948  
And off hir sone the hasti cruel deede.

And remembryng, she castith in ballaunce,  
Off hertli wo that she dede endure,  
Thouhte yiff she dede vpon ther deth vengauunce, 4952  
To slen hir sone it were ageyn nature.  
Thus in a weer longe [time] she dede endure,  
Hir dedli sorwe peisyng euerideel,  
Whethir she\* shal be tendre or cruel. 4956

It were against  
nature to slay  
her son;

Thus tendre, I meene, hir sone for to spare,  
Or punshe the deth off hir brethre tweyne.  
Thus counfortles, al destitut and bare,  
In langwisshyng shendureth foorth hir peyne; 4960  
And remedie can she non ordeyne,  
Sauf fayn she wolde auenge hir, yiff she may,  
But thanne cam nature foorth and seide nay.

yet the murder  
of his uncles  
must be  
avenged.

It was hir sone, a-geyn al kyndli riht 4964  
On whom she caste auenged for to be:  
To women alle an ougli straunge siht,  
That a mooder, deuoid off al pite,  
Sholde slen hir child so merciles parde. 4968  
Nay nay, nat so, nature wil nat assente;  
For yiff she dede, ful sore she shal repente.

Without com-  
fort she  
remained  
undecided;

But O allas, al fatal puŕueiaunce  
Kepith his cours, as summe clerkis seyn; 4972  
But the writyng off doctours, in substaunce,  
And these dyuynes reple the ageyn,  
And afferme thoppynyoun is in veyn  
Off hem that truste on fate or destyne: 4976  
For God aboue hath the souereynte,

but Fate must  
take its course

And off Fortune the power may restreyne,  
To saue and spille lik as folk disserue;  
Ageyn his will thei may nothyng ordeyne 4980  
Off necessite, what cours that thei conserue.  
But this mateer al hooli I reserue

(although not  
against God's  
will),

4951. indure H.

4954. she dyd long while endure R (*in later band*) — time]  
om. R 3.

4956. she] that she B, R 3. 4960. foorth] for R.

4961. non] noon othir H, none other P.

4963. forth nature R — foorth] ageyn H. 4970. shal] did R.

4975. And] om. H. 4976. on] of H — destanye R.

4981. that] om. R.



Onto deuynys to termyne and conclude,  
Which apparteneth to\* no folkis rude.

4984

and Althæa,  
suddenly moved  
to wrath,

But Althea, off Calidoayne\* queen,  
Gan sore muse, and heeng in a ballaunce:

[p. 62]

Hir brethre ded, whan she dede hem seen,

Thanne was she meued anon to do vengauunce 4988

Vpon hir sone bi ful gret displesaunce;

But as poetis list for to compile,

Nature made hire withdrawe hir hand a while.

Thus atwen ire and twen affecciou<sup>n</sup>

4992

She heeld hir longe, on nouthur parti stable,

Till that she cauhte in hir opynyoun

A sodeyn rancour, which made hire be vengable;

And hasti wrathe,\* which is nat comendable, 4996

Ageyn hir sone, maad hire with hir hond

Out off hire chest to take the fatal brond.

cast the brand  
into the fire.

And sodenli she cast it in the fir,

And wex cruel, ageyn al womanheede,

5000

To execute hir venymous desir.

The fatal brond among the flawmys rede

Consumed was into asshes dede;

And furiously in hir malencolie,

5004

The vengauunce doon, thus she gan to crie:

Vengeance  
thus taken,  
she cried  
aloud to the  
Parce, Clotho,  
Lachesis, and  
Atropos,

“O ye Parchas, froward sustre thre,

Which off Ioue keepe the librarie,

And off childre at ther natyuyte

5008

Waite his sentence, which [that] may nat varie,

Wherso it be welful or contrarie,

Vpon his doomys takyng alway heed,

How that ye shal dispose the fatal threed. 5012

Thou Cloto first takest\* thi rokke on honde,

And Lachesis\* afftir doth begynne,

4983. determyne R.

4984. apparteneth] nat parteneth B, R, J, H 5 — to] onto B,  
R, H 5 — no] om. R, J, H 5.

4985. Calidoayne] Calcidoayne B, Calidonye R.

4986. Bigan R — a] om. R. 4987. seen] se H.

4992. atwen] bitwene R — twen] betwene R.

4996. wraththe B — is nat] ne is R.

5002. flawmys] colis R. 5006. sustren R, H.

5008. children R. 5009. Waite his] Awayten the R.

5013. first] om. R, J, H 5 — takest] cast B, H (*scribal blunder*  
for *tast*), take R, takith R 3 — on] in R.

5014. Lachesis] Lathesis B, R, J (*a slip of pen merely, c and*  
*are often scarcely distinguishable*).



Bi gret ays, who can vndirstonde,  
 The threed on lengthe to drawen & to spynne; 5016  
 But whan the sperit shal fro the bodi twynne,  
 Thou Attropos doost thi cruel peyne  
 Ful frowardli to parte the threed on tweyne.

I may weel pleyne on such departisoun, 5020 "You have  
 Nat for a day, but, o allas, for euere! killed my two  
 Ye han ontwynyd and maad dyuysiouz brothers, and,  
 Off my too brethre, [and] causid hem disseuere, alas, now I  
 That heer a-lyue I shal seen hem neuere. have slain my  
 And I off haste, allas, whi dede I so! son to avenge  
 Tauenge ther deth ha[ue] slayn my sone also. their death. I  
 5024 will complain  
 with you for-  
 ever."

O ye thre douhtren off Herberus the felle,  
 Whos ougli mooder was the blake nyht, 5028 Whereupon she  
 Al your kynreede and lynage lith in helle; thrust a sword  
 And for tauenge the wrong and gret onriht through her  
 Which that I haue accomplisshid in your siht, heart.  
 I will with you perpetueli compleyne, 5032  
 Lich my desert endure sorwe & peyne!"

And whil she gan thus with himself[e] stryue  
 Vpon hir sorwes, that were eend[el]es,  
 She made a suerd thoruhout hir herte ryue, 5036  
 Off hir liff heer she was to rech[el]es.

AND Bochas affter, amonges al the pres,  
 Sauh, as hym thouhte, with a ful hidous cheer,  
 Ded off visage, Hercules appeere, 5040

Whos fader was Iubiter the grete,  
 His mooder douhter off kyng Amphitriton,  
 Callid Alcumena, whilom born in Crete.  
 And as poetis rehersyn oon bi oon, 5044  
 So excellent was ther neuer noon,

Hercules, son  
 of Jupiter and  
 Alcmena, most  
 famous of men,  
 next appeared  
 before Bochas.

5015. who so R. 5016. on] of, R.

5018. Antropos R, J, H 5, Antrapos R 3. 5019. on] or R.

5020. on] in R, J, of R 3 — departicioun H, H 5, departicion R, P.

5023. brethern J — and] om. H.

5024. heer] he R — on lyue R.

5027. Cerebus R, J, H 5, Herebus H, Erebus P — thre] om. J.

5029. Al] And R — & al your lynage hih R.

5034. Large capital in B — she gan] be gan J — witb hirsilff  
 hus streyue R, J.

5036. to ryue R, arive H.

5037. heer] om. H, R, R 3 — liff] silff R, silf J, H 5 — to] om.

R, so H, R 3, P.

5038. B has no initial here. 5042. kyng] om. R.

5043. sumtyme R.

To speke off conquest, [of] victorie\* and [of] fame,  
Heer in this world that hadde so gret a name.

He was terrible  
to look upon,  
black-bearded,  
with bristly hair  
and dressed in  
a lion's skin,

Dreedful of look he was, and riht terrible, 5048  
His berd eek blak, which heeng ful lowe doun,  
And al his her as bristlis wer horrible,

His robe also, ful merueilous off facioun,  
Was off the skyn off a fers leoun, 5052  
Which [from his bake] of verray force he rente,  
With-in a forest\* alone whan he wente.

and he held  
a mace  
of steel in his  
hand.

In his hand he bar a maas off steel,  
Which to beholde was wonder large & huge 5056  
Bi apperence, as Bochas felte weel;

Dempte off resoun, as a rihtful iuge,  
That Hercules hadde to his refuge  
Wisdam with force, for tencrece his fame, 5060  
Alle beestis wilde for to make hem tame.

"Take heed,  
Bochas," he  
said, "my  
merits are  
more com-  
mendable than  
any tongue can  
tell.

And onto Bochas he gan loude crie,  
"Tak riht good heed[e], for it is no fable,  
I for my meritis, to speke off cheualrie 5064  
And noble triumphes, am most comendable,  
To be preferrid most worthi and most hable,  
Which haue accomplisshid al that may excelle  
Thoruh hih prowessse, that any tunge\* can telle. 5068

"Before my  
birth, Jove  
said to Juno,  
that Hercules,  
noblest of the  
noble, would  
be born on  
such a day.

Eek off my berthe, in heuene ful yore ago [p. 63]  
Fulli conceyued my constellacioun,  
Mihti Ioue saide onto Iuno,  
On such a day, in such a regioun, 5072  
Oon shal be born, most myhti off renoun,  
Noblest off nobles bothe in werre and pes,  
Off whom the name shal be Hercules.

5046. victoire B.

5049. eek] also R.

5053. from his bake] *om.* H, R 3.

5054. With-in a forest] From his bak B, H, R 3 — whan] as R 3, H 5.

5055. mas J, mase H 5, mace R, R 3, P.

5058. Demede R.

5060. With force wisdom R — for] *om.* R — fame] name H, R 3.

5061. Alle] As R.

5065. nobles R — triumphes *is muddled in R.*

5068. hih] his R 3, his hih R — tunge] mouth B, H, *man* R 3.

5069. Eek] Also R.

- The which[e] doom whan Iuno vndirstood,  
 Off Iubiter conceyuyng the entente,  
 And knew my fate sholde be so good,  
 To Lucynya hir messenger she sente." . . .  
 But summe seyn, how doun hirself she wente  
 To this goddesse, goddesse off chilyng,  
 And hir besouhte to graunte hire hir askyng:  
 That she wolde from Hercules translate  
 The influence off his natyuyte,  
 Helpe to reuerse his fame and eek his fate,  
 And graunte it hooli to yong Euristee;  
 And that Lucynya present wolde be  
 The same hour bi Iubiter prouyded,  
 It to posseede al hool and ondeuyded.  
 Thus to the mooder off [this] Euristee,  
 Iuno the goddesse grauntid hir fauour,  
 Therbi disposyng that he sholde be  
 Mihti off puissaunce lik an emperour;  
 But off his noblesse the conquest & labour,  
 And off his manhod the prowesse and pursut  
 Bi Hercules was fully execut.  
 Thus Hercules hadde the trauaile,  
 And Euristeus bar away the name;  
 Eek Hercules fauht in plate & maile,  
 And hih emprises proudli dede attame:  
 But the report off his noble fame  
 To Euristeus was fynali ascryued;  
 Thus off his thank was Hercules depried.  
 Ful offte in armys sum man doth riht weel,  
 And offte causith that the feeld is wonne;  
 And off a-nother that dede neueradeel,  
 The price out-spreddith lich a sheene sonne.  
 And offte it happith, that he that best hath ronne  
 Doth nat the spere lich his desert posseede,  
 Wher fals fauour yeueth eueri man his meede.

5076 "But Iuno  
contrived that  
my good for-  
tune should be  
translated to  
young Eurys-  
theus."

5080

5084

5088

5092

5096

5100

So it was  
Hercules who  
achieved the  
conquests and  
had all the  
labour, while  
Eurystheus  
bore away the  
name.

5104

It often hap-  
pens that the  
man who wins  
the victory  
does not get  
the credit for  
it. Fame has  
more than one  
trumpet.

5083. wolde] sholde H.

5085. reuerse] reserue R, J, H 5 — fame] name R, J, H 5 —  
eek] om. R, J, H 5.

5090. this] om. H. 5097. Thus] This J.

5099. Eek] Thus R, Also J, H 5. 5100. hih] his R.

5102. was fynali] fully was R.

5107. lich a] as shyneth be R, as shineþ be J, H 5, P.

5108. 2nd that] which R.

Fame in hir paleis hath trumpes mo than oon,  
 Summe off gold that yeuen a ful fressh soun; 5112  
 Sum man hath laude, that deserueth non,  
 And summe ha[ue] been ful worthi off renoun,  
 Nothyng preferrid bi comendacioun,  
 As bi report off statis hih and lowe, 5116  
 So frowardli Famys trumpe hath blowe.

Touchyng armys, the poore nor the riche  
 Be nat echon off herte coragous;  
 Nor alle men may nat been iliche, 5120  
 Nor off ther name egal nor gracious.  
 And thouth the poore ha[ue] be victorious,  
 Off auenture to do ful weel sum day,  
 Other ha[ue] pynchid to take his thank away. 5124

It does not follow that he who slays the deer always eats the venison, and although one

man may beat the bush, it may be another who gets the birds.

Oon sleth the deer with an hokid arwe,  
 Whos part is non yit off the venysoun;  
 Oon bet the bush, another hath the sparwe, 5128  
 And alle the birdis in his possessioun;  
 Oon draweth his nettis in ryuers vp & doun,  
 With sundri baitis\* cast out lyne and hook,  
 And hath no part off al that euer he took.

An euidence heerooff ye may see, 5132  
 Ful notable to be put in memorie,\*  
 Off Hercules and [of] Euristee;  
 For Hercules gat ay the victorie,  
 And Euristeus receyued hath the glorie. 5136  
 Thus ther palme partid was on tweyne;  
 The ton reioisshid, the tother bar the payne.

Hercules and Eurystheus are an example of this.

Eurystheus was a prince of Athens, son of king Sthenelus; but it was Hercules who won the prize of victory.

Euristeus was a prynce off Athene,  
 Sone and hair be discent off lyne 5140  
 Onto the kyng that callid was Stillene,  
 Vnder whos myht, as Bochas doth termyne,  
 Hercules thoruh knyhtli disciplyne  
 Profitid so, most manli and most wis, 5144  
 That from all othre he bar away the pris.

5112. yeueth H.

5117. Famys] fame his R, J, P, H 5. 5118. nor] ne R, J, P.

5119. hertis R. 5120, 21. Nor] Neithir R.

5122. poore man R. 5127. betith R. 5129. &] om. R.

5130. baitis] battis B — out] om. R 3. 5132. An] In R.

5133, 35, 36. memoire, victoire, gloire B. 5134. 2nd of] om. H.

5137. departid was in R.

5139. a] om. R, H 5. 5142. determyne R.

5144. Profitid] Prouided J, Prouisid R, Prouidid P.

But O allas, that euer it sholde fall,  
 So noble a knyht, so manli, so notable,  
 That any spotte sholde his pris appall  
 Or cause his corage for to been onstable,  
 Which is a thyng doolful and lamentable,  
 From his knyhtod, which is a thyng to straunge,  
 That euer a woman sholde his herte chaunge!

5148 Alas that so  
 noble a man  
 should be  
 drawn from his  
 knighthood by  
 a woman!

I will excuse hem, because ther nature  
 Ys to chaungen hertis and corages;  
 A-geyn ther power no force may endure,  
 For ther flatrie and sugrid fair language,  
 Lich Sirenes, fressh off ther visage,  
 For tenchaunge off pryncis the noblesse,  
 Mo than Hercules can bern heeroff witnesse.

[p. 64] I will  
 excuse them,  
 for it is their  
 nature to cause  
 hearts to  
 change.  
 5156

Thus Hercules, astoned and ashamed,  
 Onto Bochas shewed his presence,  
 Seide, "allas! my knyhtod is diffamed  
 Bi a ful fals amerous pestilence,  
 So sore constreyned bi mortal violence,  
 Wherbi, allas, my manhod was applied,  
 Be sleithe off women oppressid & maistried,

5160 But Hercules  
 stood ashamed  
 before Bochas  
 and said, "Alas,  
 my knighthood  
 was tarnished,  
 for I shaved my  
 beard and wore  
 woman's dress  
 for love of  
 Iole,  
 5164

To take ther habite & clothe me in ther weede,  
 To shaue my berd and farse my visage  
 With oynementis, ageyn[es] al manheede,  
 To make it souple, & chaungid my language;  
 And to compleyne mor off myn outrage,  
 Vpon my fyngris, fyue twies told,  
 I hadde ryngis richeli wrouht off gold.

5168

Thus was my corage chaungid femynyne  
 For loue off oon callid Yole,  
 Off condiciouns thouh she were serpentyne,  
 Me thouhte she was so fair vpon to see,  
 That al my ioie was with hire to be;  
 And that non sholde apparceyue my trespase,  
 I chaungid bothe habite, look and face,

5176 though she  
 were of a ser-  
 pentine  
 disposition.  
 5180

5152. his herte] heroff bere R. 5155. power] nature R.  
 5156. languages R. 5157. visages R.  
 5158. tenchaunge] to eschaunge R.  
 5160. astonyed R.  
 5168. shaue] shere R — farse] force R.  
 5170. chaunge R.  
 5177. so fair] fayrest R.



"I did this that  
I might ap-  
proach her  
freely; but it  
has ruined my  
good name.

And was a woman outward in apparence,  
Off entent to haue mor liberte  
To vse my lustis, and haue experience  
Off appetitis which that onleefful be. 5184  
Wheroff the sclaundre reboundeth onto me,  
That I dar seyn, myn outragous trespase  
Doth al my knyhtod & my prowesse difface.

"Wherefore,  
Bochas, tell  
my misfortunes  
as they were in  
deed, so that  
others, hearing  
of them, may  
amend their  
vicious lives.  
Even wise men  
may profit by  
the example of  
fools."

Wherefore, O Bochas, I pray the tak good heede 5188  
For to descryue in termys pleyne and cleer  
Myn infortune, riht as it was in deede,  
That whan other conceyue the maneer  
Off myn onhappis, contagious for to heer, 5192  
Thei may bexauple off me doon ther peyne,  
From vicious liff ther hertis to restreyne.

For these foolis that al wisdam despise,  
And be contrarie\* to vertuous disciplyne, 5196  
May yiue exauple to folkis that be wise,  
And been to hem a lanterne off doctryne,  
Vices teschewe and prudentli declyne  
Fro flessfli lustis; for it is tauht in schoolis, 5200  
That wise men been alday war be foolis."

Bochas thought  
it would be  
wrong to speak  
of his vices  
alone

Whan Bochas hadde conceyued the compleynt  
Off Hercules in his appeeryng,  
And how his noblesse bi women was atteynt 5204  
Thoruh his pitous disordynat luyng,  
He thouhte anon, hymselfe remembryng,  
It hadde be routhe for taput in mynde  
His vices alle, and vertues lefft behynde. 5208

or in any way  
to cast a slur  
on his good  
name.

Considred also it was inpertynent,  
Outher bi language to write, ageyn al riht,  
Any\* thyng that sholde in sentement  
The fame amenuse off so noble a knyht, 5212  
Or to discrece in ony manys siht  
His glorious prowesse, sith poetes for his werris  
Reisen his renoun so hih aboute the steris.

5181. R omits to 5348, leaf lost between 32 and 33.

5188. Wherefore] wher of H, P, H 5.

5191. maneer] mateere H, matter R 3, P.

5196. contraire B.

5201. been alday war] al dai ben tauht J, H 5.

5207. taput] ta be put H, to put J, H 5, to have put P.

5209. impertinent P.

5211. Any] And B, H, P, A R 3.



For he was bothe knyht and philisophre,  
 And for his strengthe callid a geaunt;  
 For comoun profit he proudli gan eek profre,  
 Off manli corage yaff therto ful graunt,  
 Tentre in Egipt &\* slen ther the tiraunt  
 Callid Busiris, which off ful fals entente  
 Slouh all straungers that thoruh his kyngdam wente.

5216 Hercules was  
 both a philoso-  
 pher and a  
 knight.

For vnder a colour off liberalite,  
 To his paleis he gladli wolde calle  
 Straungers echon that cam thoruh his contre,  
 And sollempneli receyue hem oon and alle,  
 And lich a kyng, bothe in chaumbre and halle  
 Make hem such cheer in alle maner thyng,  
 As appertened onto a worthi kyng.

5224 He slew  
 Busiris in  
 Egypt, who  
 treacherously  
 murdered his  
 guests

But whil his gestis lay a-nyht and sleep,  
 This fals[e] tiraunt, in ful cruel wise,  
 Moordred hem echon or thei toke\* keep;  
 And aftir that — this was eek his gise —  
 With ther blood to make a sacrefise  
 To Iubiter, god off that contre,  
 Off hool entent to plesse his deite,

5232 and offered up  
 their blood to  
 Jove, that he  
 might send rain  
 to his kingdom.

That in his kyngdam, on frutis & on greyn [p. 65]  
 The land tencrece bi gret[e] habundaunce,  
 Doun from heuene he wolde sende hem reyn.  
 This mene he made and this fals cheuysaunce,  
 To moordre and slen he hadde so gret plesaunce;  
 For off alle thyng hym\* thouhte it dede him\* good  
 To slayen\* straungers and to sheede ther blood.

5240

But whan this moordre off Busiris was kouth,  
 That no straunger myht passe his lond in pes,  
 This manli knyht, yit flouryng in his youth,  
 This noble famous, this worthi Hercules,  
 Amonges other put hymself in pres,  
 And lich a gest outward in shewyng  
 Cam to the paleis off Busiris the kyng,

5244 But Hercules  
 went to his  
 palace

5248

5220. &] to B, J — in] in to J — ther the tiraunt] þe geant  
 J, H 5.

5232. token B. 5236. hool] om. H.

5238. tencrece] encreased H 5, P.

5242. off] om. P — hym] he B — him] hem B.

5243. slayen] slen B — slayen straungers and to sheede] mur-  
 dere his gestis and shede J, H 5.

and after rebuk-  
ing him, killed  
him and set  
Egypt in ease.

Rebuked hym off his gret outrage  
Doon to his gestis bi cruel violence. 5252

And for to make pesible that passage,  
And for to auenge his inportable offence,  
And off his moordre to make recompence,  
This Hercules slouh Busiris\* in deede, 5256  
And took the blood which he dede bleede,

Offrid it vp Iubiter to plese,  
For this victorie hym to magnesie;  
And al Egipt thus was set in ese: 5260  
Ther lond, ther frutis gan also multeplie,  
Ther greyn encrece a-boute on ech partie  
And to habounde bi influence off reyn,  
Which affortyme off vitaille was bareyn. 5264

He also slew  
Antæus, who  
renewed his  
strength each  
time he touched  
the earth.

¶ Another geaunt callid Antheus,  
Kyng off Libie, and gouerned al that lond,  
Whom Hercules, most strong & coraious,  
Whilom outraied [&] slouh hym with his hond; 5268  
For as thei wrastlid, bexperience he fond,  
Touchyng therthe this geaunt, it is trewe,  
His force, his myht dede alwey renewe.

But whan Hercules the maner dede espie, 5272  
How his strengthe renewed ageyn so offte,  
Ther ageyns he shoop a remedie:  
Hie in the hair he reised hym vp a-loffte;  
And with his armys, hard & nothyng soffte, 5276  
Bak and bonys so sore he dede enbrace,  
That he fill ded toforn hym in the place.

Some books  
say that An-  
tæus was in-  
vincible in his  
own kingdom,

But summe bookis off this geaunt telle,  
Withynne his kyngdam who dede hym assaile, 5280  
He wolde off newe his cheualrie compelle  
Effte ageyn to meete hym in bataile;  
And in this wise ful seelde he dede faile  
Tafforce off newe, as folk shal vndirstonde, 5284  
His strengthe, his myht all enmyes to withstonde.

and that Her-  
cules enticed  
him away from  
its borders and  
thus defeated  
him.

But Hercules off hih discrecioun,  
The feeld on hym manli to recure,  
Hadde hym be sleihte out off his regioun; 5288  
And as thei mette theer off auenture,  
The said Antheus myht[e] nat endure,

5253. that] the H. 5256. Bisiris B. 5267. &] & most H.  
5269. he] om. H. 5276. his] om. H.

But was disconfited bi Hercules anon,  
Maugre his myht, he and his men echon.

5292

¶ Afftir this conquest Hercules is gon,  
For exercise his prowess for to vse,  
Ageyn the myhti stronge\* Gerion,  
Kyng off Spaigne, off Malliagre & Ebuse,  
The which[e] tirant myhte hym nat excuse,  
That al his labour, as poetis do compile,  
Was fro these rewmys his peeple\* to exile.

5296

Hercules next  
conquered and  
slew Geryon of  
Spain, who had  
exiled all his  
people;

His tyrannye ne myht nat longe endure;  
For Hercules, the noble worthi knyht,  
Made vpon hym a gret disconfiture,  
And slouh the tirant as thei mette in fht.  
And afftir that, he, thoruh his grete myht,  
Off his prowess and magnanymyte  
Slouh Cerberus with his hedis thre.

5300

¶ The famous boole off the lond off Crete,  
Which that destroyed al that regioun,  
He slouh also whan thei dede meete;  
And in Nemea he slouh a fers leoun,  
And for a record off his hih renoun,  
Off manli force his skyn away he took,  
And to his bodi a coote theroff he shoop:

5304

and afterwards  
he killed  
Cerberus.

To all his enmyes to shewe hym mor dreedful,  
Therefore he werid that hidous garnement.  
And for in armys he neuer was founde dull,  
But euer ilich[e] fressh in his entent,  
Into a mounteyn he made anon his went,  
Callid Erimantus; and ther in his passage  
He slouh a boor, most wilde & most sauage.

5308

He also slew  
the Cretan Bull  
and the  
Nemean Lion,  
of whose skin  
he made a  
coat,

5312

Beside a ryuer callid Stiphalus,  
Off furious birdis he slouh a gret[e] noumbre;  
Withynne the kyngdam off kyng Fyneus  
Al the contre for thei dede encoumbre:  
For with ther shadwe & outraious ouble,  
On seed or frutis whereuer thei aliht,  
Al was deuoured in eueri manys siht.

5316

the Eryman-  
thian Bear,

5320

¶ Vpon the mounteyn callid Auentyne,  
Which is nat ferr fro Rome the cite,  
Ther is a wode, as cronycles determyne,

[p. 66]

the  
Symphallian  
Birds,

5324

5328

5295. stronge] straunge B, strange H. 5296. Malliagre] Baleares P.  
5299. peeple] peeplis B, H. 5315. garment H. 5326. or frutis] on frute H.

and Cacus,  
the giant of  
Mt. Aventine,

Riht fressh off siht and goodli on to see.  
And Hercules passyng bi that contre,  
Fro Spayneward goyng be Ytaile,  
Cachus the geaunt dede hym ther assaile.

5332

who stole his  
cattle and hid  
them in a cave,

Whil Hercules among the leues greene  
Leide hym to slepe, off sodeyn auenture,  
And his beestis ageyn the sonne sheene,  
Whil that he slepte, wente in ther pasture,  
Cam Cachus foorth, ful hidous off stature,  
Thouhte he wolde these beestis with hym haue,  
Stal hem echon and hid hem in a caue.

5336

dragging them  
backwards by  
the tail, like a  
thief.

And lik a theeff he made hem go bakward,  
That no man sholde the traxis off hem knowe,  
Nor off ther passage haue no reward;  
For bi ther tailis he ladde hem on a rowe  
Into his caue, which that stood ful lowe.  
And for thei wern off excellent fairnesse,  
To keepe hem cloos he dede his besynesse.

5344

Hercules heard  
their lowing

Out off his slep whan Hercules awook  
And aparceyued his oxes were away,  
He roos hym up, and caste aboute his look,  
Gan tespie in al the haste he may  
To what parti the traxis off hem lay.  
And whil he stood thus musyng in the shade,  
[He] herde lowyng that his oxes made.

5348

and, finding the  
cave, overcame  
Cacus and slew  
him.

And bi ther lowyng he gan anon approche  
Toward the parti wher thei were kept ful cloos,  
Fond the caue vndir a myhti roche;  
And proude Cachus, which hadde hem in depooos,  
Geyn Hercules he sturdili aroos:  
But for al that, he myht hymself nat\* saue,  
For he hym slouh at thentre off the caue.

5356

5360

He then cleared  
Mt. Aventine of  
brigands.

And thus his beestis he hath ageyn recurid,  
That sempste afforn irrecuperable.  
Afftir the mounteyn be force he hath assurid,

5364

5332. that] the H. 5333. be] fro H.  
5346. ful] so H.  
5350. parceyued R, perceived J — oxen H, P.  
5351. hym] om. R. 5352. Bigan to espie R.  
5355. He] om. H — the lowyng P, H 5 — oxen P.  
5360. Ayens R. 5361. myhtnat himself B.  
5364. irrecuperable R. 5365. hath] hast H.

Which for brigantis afor was ful doutable;  
 But bi his manhod it was maad habitable,  
 That men myhte, for dreed off any fo,  
 Whan euer thei wolde freli come or go.

5368

¶ Touchyng his conquest vpon Femynye,  
 Geyn Amazones with Theseus he wente,  
 The queen Ypolita thoruh his cheualrie,  
 For his parti anon to hym he hente.  
 And Ypolita off ful trewe entente  
 Gaff onto hym in tokne off victorie  
 Off gold a girdil to haue hir in memorie.

When he went  
 to Femynye,  
 Hippolyte  
 presented him  
 with her golden  
 girdle.

5372

¶ Afftir to Affrik he wente a ful gret pas,  
 Onli off purpos the gardeyn for to see,  
 Which appertened to [the] kyng Athlas,  
 That brothir was to kyng Promothe,  
 In astrologie ful weel expert was he.  
 And in this gardeyn, off which I ha[ue] you told,  
 The riche braunchis and applis were off gold,

5376

Afterwards, in  
 Africa, he slew  
 a serpent in  
 King Atlas'  
 garden and  
 fethed away  
 the Golden  
 Apples of the  
 Hesperides.

5380

Thoruh magik maad bi gret auisement,  
 Ful streihtly\* kept and closid enviroun,  
 And Iwachchid with a fell serpent,  
 That no man entred that riche mansioun.  
 But Hercules, most myhti off renoun,  
 The serpent slouh throuh his manli pursuit,  
 And fro that gardeyn he bar away the fruit.

5384

5388

This seid Athlas, as bookis specefie,  
 And poetis eek off hym endite,  
 He was ful cunnyng in astronomie  
 And theryn dede ful gretli hym\* delite;  
 And many a book he made & dede write  
 With gret labour and gret[e] dilligence  
 In his tyme vpon that science,

5392

Atlas was a  
 learned astron-  
 omer who  
 wrote many  
 valuable  
 books.

5396

The which[e] wern mor precious than gold,  
 And mor riche in his opynyoun.  
 But Hercules, in soth as it is told,

5400

which Hercules  
 seized and  
 brought to  
 Greece.

5367. manhod] knyhtode R.

5371. Ayens R.

5373. parti] pray R. 5376. hir] om. R.

5380. the kyng R, H, J.

5385. streihtly] streiht B, R, streiet J, streite P. 5389. The]

Ther H.

5392. eek off hym] of hym also R. 5393. ful] om. R.

5394. hym ful gretli B. 5398. than] that R.

Gat alle the bookis thoruh his hih renoun,  
 Bar hem bi force out off that regioun;  
 And into Grece, lich a conquerour,  
 With hym he brouhte for a gret tresour.

5404

In Thrace he  
 slew Diomedes,  
 who fed his  
 horses with  
 human flesh.

Off Trace he slouh the tirant outraious  
 That whilom was callid Diomede,  
 Which moordred al that cam in[to] his hous,  
 And with ther flessh his hors he dede feede.  
 And thoruh his witt, labour and manheede,  
 Off Achelaus, which was a gret[e] wonder,  
 He made the stremys for to parte assonder;

[p. 67]

5408

He parted the  
 Achelous,  
 which before  
 that time had  
 done great  
 damage.

And bi his wisdam dede hem so deuide,  
 In too parties disseueryng his passage:  
 For tofortyme no man myhte abide  
 Off his cours the\* furious fell outrage;  
 For in contrees it dede so gret damage,  
 Turnyng vpward, ther was noon othir boote,  
 Where it flowed, off trees cropp and roote.

5412

5416

He next slew  
 all but one of  
 the horrible  
 serpents of  
 Lake Lerna.

A gret emprise he dede eek vndirtake,  
 Whan that the [wor]mees, hidous & horrible,  
 Aryued up off Archadie in the lake  
 Callid Lerne, the beestis ful odible,  
 Which with ther teeth & mouthes ful terrible  
 Frut, greyn and corn dede mōrtali deuoure;  
 But Hercules, the contre to socoure,

5420

5424

Cam lik a knyht ther malice for to lette;  
 And bi his prudence destroied hem euerichon.  
 Withynne the lake the wermys up he shette,  
 Sauff among alle behynde was lefft on;  
 And ageyn hym this Hercules anon  
 Off knyththod cauhte so gret auauntage,  
 That to the contre he dede no mor damage.

5428

5432

No one ever  
 had more fame  
 or excellence in  
 arms;

Thus al that euere may rehersed be  
 Touchyng knyththod, prowess or prudence,  
 Glorious fame or long felicite,  
 This knyhtli man hadde most excellence,  
 And in armys lengest experience.

5436

5405. tirant] Geaunt R. 5406. whilom] sumtyme R.

5411. departe R. 5415. the] and the B.

5420. wormees] mees B, H, P, mes R, J, H 5, wormees R 3.

5435. Glorious] by glorious H.



For his tryumphes and actis marciall  
Sette up pilers for a memoriall,

Which remembrid his conquestis most notable,  
And his deedis bi grauyng dede expresse —  
Beyonde which no lond is habitable,  
So ferr abrod spradde his hih noblesse.

5440 and as a memorial to his martial deeds he set up the Pillars of Gades.

But as the sonne lesith his brihtnesse  
Sumwhile whan he is fresshest in his speer,  
With onwar cloudis that sodenli appeer,

5444

Semblabli the noblesse and the glory  
Off Hercules in this onstable liff  
Eclipsid was and shadwid his memory  
Bi Deianira, that whilom was his wiff:  
For bi hir fraude cam in the mortal striff,  
As ye shal heere the maner and the cas,  
Wherbi that he loste his liff, allas.

5445 Yet the glory of Hercules was tarnished by the fraud of his wife Deianeira.

Yit for hir sake, this most manli man\*  
Fauht, as I fynde, a synguler bataile  
With Achelous, sone off the occian,  
Lik as poetis make rehearsaile.

5456 although he fought Achelous, son of the ocean, for her sake.

And as ech other proudli dede assaile,  
This Hercules, off knythod souereyne,  
Rente from his hed oon off his hornys tweyne.

5460

Off kyng Oene she was the douhter deere,  
To Hercules ioyned in mariage;  
And as thei cam to a gret ryuere  
With sturdi waves, wher was no passage,  
Nessus, the geaunt, ougli off visage,  
To Hercules profred his seruise,  
And ful falsli ageyn hym gan deuise.

5464 She was daughter of King Oeneus; and once when she and Hercules came to a river, the giant Nessus offered to carry her across.

Made his promys to Hercules in deede,  
To putte his liff in gret auenture,  
Ouer the strem Deianire to leede,  
Because he was large off his stature.  
And for she was a riht fair creature,  
Whan thei were passid and Icome to londe,  
Nessus falsli wolde vpon the stronde

5468 but when they arrived at the other side, he attempted her virtue, and Hercules wounded him mortally with an arrow.

5443. his hih] is his H, his J, H 5.

5449. shadowde R. 5450. whilom] sumryme R.

5451. the] om. H, P, R 3. 5453. that] om. H.

5454. This stanza is transposed with the next B, H.

5458. other] om. R. 5460. Rente] Sent R — hornys] armys R.

5461. Oeme R, J. 5462. in] bi R. 5467. ayens R.

Ha[ue] knowe hir flessli, lik as writ Ouide,  
 Hercules hauyng theroff a siht, 5476  
 As he abood vpon the tother side.  
 And for tauenge hym off his grete onriht,  
 Took his bowe and bente it anon riht,  
 And with an arwe, filid sharp & grounde, 5480  
 Gaff to Nessus his dedli fatal wounde.

His last request was that  
 Deianeira give  
 his blood-stained  
 shirt to Hercules,

Lich a conduit gushed out the blood,  
 And whan he sauh that he muste deie,  
 To Deianire afforn hym ther she stood, 5484  
 With al his herte hire he gan to preie,  
 That in o thyng his lust she wolde obeie,  
 To take his sherte, and be nat rech[e]lles,  
 With blood disteyned, and sende it Hercules, 5488

so that he and  
 she might be  
 reconciled.  
 But when Hercules  
 put it on  
 it burnt him so  
 terribly

Therwith to hym to be reconcilid. [p. 68]  
 And she the sherte to hym anon hath sent,  
 Thoruh whos venym, alas, he was begilid!  
 For what be touchyng, & what benchauzement, 5492  
 His flessch, his bonys furiousli were brent,  
 And among his dedli peynes alle,  
 Into a rage he sodenli is falle.

that he ran  
 about like a  
 madman, up-  
 rooted trees,  
 broke the  
 horns of cattle  
 and gnawed  
 their bones, and  
 thus came to  
 his end.

[And] as a beeste furiousli he ran 5496  
 On valis, hillis among the craggi stonys,  
 Semblabli as doth a wood[e] man,  
 Pullid up trees & rootis al attonys,  
 Brak beestis hornys, & al tognew ther bonys. 5500  
 Was it nat pite that a knyht so good  
 Sholde among beestis renne sauagyne & wood!

It was all because  
 he trusted in  
 women. Alas,  
 that courage,  
 wisdom, discre-  
 tion, learning  
 and philosophy  
 should have  
 been darkened  
 by their sleight!

Thus ouerwhelmyd was al his worthynesse,  
 And to declyn wente his prosperite. 5504  
 And cause & roote off al his wrechidnesse,  
 Was for that he sette his felicite  
 To truste so moche the mutabilite  
 Off these women, which erli, late & soone 5508  
 Off ther nature braide vpon the moone.

5475. lik] *om.* H. 5481. fatall dedly H. 5482. guysshed R.  
 5483. sauh] *size* J. 5484. to forn R.  
 5485. gan] began R, bigan J, biganne H 5 — to] *om.* J.  
 5493. were] was R, H. 5496. And] *om.* H.  
 5497. On] in H — valeis R, valeys P, valcies H 5.  
 5502. sauagyne] sauage R, J, R 3, P, H 5.  
 5503. was] as R. 5505. al] *om.* R. 5506. his] al his R.  
 5508. late] *om.* R.

Allas, alas! al noblesse & prudence,  
 Prowesse off armys, force & cheualrie,  
 Forsihte off wisdam, discrecioun & science, 5512  
 Vertuous studie, profityng in clergie,  
 And the cleer shynyng off philosophie,  
 Hath thoruh fals lustis been heeraform manacid,  
 Be sleihte off women dirkid and diffacid! 5516

O Hercules, my penne I feele quake,  
 Myn ynke fulfyllid off bittir teris salte,  
 Thi[s] pitous tragedie to write for thi sake,  
 Whom alle poetis glorefie and exalte; 5520  
 But fraude off women made thi renoun halte,  
 And froward muses thi tryumphes al toreende,  
 For to descryue, alas, thi fatal eende.

Hercules, my  
 pen trembles,  
 my ink is  
 filled with  
 bitter tears  
 when I write  
 your history.

## [Lenvoye.]

THE soote venym, the sauouri fals poisoun, 5524  
 The dreedful ioie, the dolerous plesaunce,  
 The woful gladnesse, *with* furious resoun,  
 Feith disespeired, ay stable in variaunce,  
 Vertu exilyng, where lust hath gouernaunce, 5528  
 Thoruh fals luxurie diffacen al noblesse,  
 As this tragedie can bere ful weel witenesse.

This tragedy  
 bears witness  
 to the ruin  
 wrought by  
 licentiousness.

Wher froward Venus hath dominacioun,  
 And blynde Cupide his subiectis doth auauunce, 5532  
 And wilful lust thoruh indiscrecioun  
 Is chose iuge to holden the ballaunce,  
 Ther chois onlefful hath thoruh onhappi chaunce  
 Dirkid off pryncis the famous hih prowesse, 5536  
 As this tragedie can bere ful weel witenesse.

Where Venus  
 and Cupid rule,  
 the fame of  
 princes is dark-  
 ened.

O thou Hercules, for al thyn hih renoun,  
 For al thi conquest and knyhtli suffisaunce,  
 Thou\* were thoruh women brouht to confusioun 5540  
 And thoruh ther fraude thi renommed puissaunce  
 Disclaundred was and brouht onto myschaunce.

Hercules, I am  
 ashamed to say  
 that, for all  
 your high re-  
 nown, you were  
 brought to  
 confusion by  
 women.

5511. armys] nature R.

5514. off] of al R. 5515. lust H — her afor be R.

5517. O] om. R. 5518. off] with R. 5519. This] Thi H.

5521. But] by H.

5526. The] om. R — with] the R, J, H 5 — resoun] tresoun H.

5527. dispeired R.

5535. chois] chose R. 5536. prowesse] noblesse R.

5538. thyn] thy H.

5540. Thou were] Though thou were B, Thoruh werre R.

I were ashamed to write it or expresse,  
Except this tragedie can bere me weel wisesse. 5544

Princes, let no  
false sorceress  
lead you into  
temptation.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, off hih discrecioun  
This thyng enprentith in your remembraunce;  
Off othres fallyng make your proteccioun,  
You to preserue thoruh prudent purueiaunce; 5548  
Afforn prouyded, that your perseueraunce  
Be nat perturbid bi no fals sorceresse,  
As this tragedie off other berth wisesse.

[A processe, of Narcissus, Biblis, Mirra and of othir  
ther onfortunys to Bochas compleynyng.]<sup>1</sup>

Narcissus,  
Byblis and  
Myrrha declare  
their unhappi-  
ness to Bochas.

**N**ARCISUS, Biblis & Mirra, alle thre 5552  
Tofor Bochas dede pitousli appeere,  
Ther infortunyes, ther infelicite  
To hym compleynyng with a dedli cheere.  
And off ther comyng to telle the manere, 5556  
Narcissus first, with sorwe & dool atteynt,  
Gan first off alle declaren his compleynt.

Narcissus, son  
of Cepheissus  
and Liriope,  
was born of  
gentle blood  
and the fairest  
of creatures.

He was [the] sone off Cephesus\* the flood,  
And his mooder callid Liriope, 5560  
And bi discent born off gentil blood,  
Off creatures fairest on to see;  
And, as I fynde, at his natyuite  
Tiresias,\* be sperit off prophesie, 5564  
Touchyng his fate thus gan speccefie:

Tiresias fore-  
told that his  
life would end  
when he first  
beheld his own  
face, and that  
many a girl  
would love him  
in vain, for no  
woman was  
beautiful  
enough to please  
him.

The goddis han prouydid hym a space  
To lyue in erthe, and so longe endure  
Til that he knowe & see his owne face; 5568  
And for his sake ful many creature,  
Bi ordynaunce off God and off Nature,  
Whan thei hym seen shal feelyn ful gret peyne,  
Yiff thei in loue his grace may nat atteyne. 5572

5543. it] *om.* R — to expresse R. 5544. me] full H.

5546. enprinted R. 5550. soceresse R.

5551. berth] beris H. 5553. Iohn Bochas H. 5558. Bigan R.

5559. 1st the] *om.* H — Cephesus] Thephesus B, H, R 3 —  
off] to H.

5560. linope R. 5564. Thiresias B.

5565. MSS. R, J, H 5 transpose lines 5846-73 and the Envoy  
(5873-5901) with lines 5566-5845.

5566. Opposite this stanza the following rubric in MS. J: Ouidius  
X<sup>o</sup>. et XI<sup>o</sup>. de transformatis. 5566. for hym R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 29 recto.

But he shal be contrarie\* & daungerous, [p. 69]

And off his port ful off straungenesse,  
And in his herte [riht] inli surquedous,  
Bi thoccasioun off his natif fairnesse; 5576  
And, presumyng off his semlynnesse,  
Shal thynke no woman so fresh nor fair of face,  
That able were to stonden in his grace.

And for the excellence off his gret beute, 5580  
He hym purposid in his tendre age,  
Neuer in his liff weddid for to be —  
He thouhte hymself so fair off his visage.  
For which he cast hym, throuh his gret outrage, 5584  
Ageyn all lustis off loue to disdeyne,  
To hunte at beestis alone and be soleyne.

And in this while that he kepte hym so  
In forestis and in wildirnesse, 5588  
A water goddesse, that callid was Echcho,  
Loued hym ful hote for his gret fairnesse;  
And secreli dede hir besynesse  
To folwe his steppis riht as any lyne, 5592  
To hir desirs to make hym to enclyne.

He herde hir weel, but he sauh hir nouht,  
Wheroff astonyd, he gan anon tenquere,  
As he that was amerueilid in his thouht, 5596  
Saide euene thus, "is any wiht now heere?"  
And she ansuerde the same, in hir manere,  
What-euer he saide, as longeth to Echcho,  
Withoute abod she seide the same also. 5600

"Come neer," quod he, and began to calle.  
"Come ner," quod she, "my ioie & my plesaunce."  
He lokid aboute [among] the rokkis alle  
And sauh nothyng beside nor in distaunce;  
But she abraide, declaryng hir greuaunce,  
And to hym seide, "myn owyn herte deere,  
Ne be nat straunge, but late us duelle ifeere."

And so it  
turned out.  
Early in life  
he thought  
himself  
too handsome  
to marry and  
became a  
hunter.  
But a water-  
nymph named  
Echo, attracted  
by his great  
beauty,  
followed  
him, calling.

Yet he saw no  
one; and  
whatever he  
said, she  
answered  
in the same  
words.

"My own dear  
heart, let us  
dwell  
together."

5573. contraire B.

5577. semblennesse R. 5578. Shal thynke] *om.* R.

5581. purposid hym R. 5582. for] *om.* H.

5583. his] *om.* R. 5586. soleyne] slayne R.

5591. secreli] sikyryly R. 5593. Inclayne R.

5595. began R. 5600. also] hym to R.

5603. the] thes R.

5605. & declaryng R. 5607. but] *om.* H.

"No," he replied, "I'd rather die, go away and don't speak to me any more."

"Nay, nay," quod he, "I will nothyng obeie  
To your desirs, for short conclusioun;  
For leuere I hadde pleyntli for to deie,  
Than ye sholde haue off me possessioun;  
We be nothyng off on opynyoun, 5608  
I heere you weel, thowh I no figure see,  
Goth forth your way & spek no mor to me!" 5612

Ashamed, she hid herself in a cave. Since that time men have heard her voice, but she has never been seen.

And she ashamed fledde hir way anon,  
As she that myhte off hym no socour haue. 5616  
But disespiered, this Echcho is fourth gon  
And hidde hirsilff in an ougli caue  
Among the rokkis, as beried in hir graue.  
And thowh so be that men hir vois may heere, 5620  
Afftir that tyme she neuer dede appeere.

The gods were angry with Narcissus for his cruelty to Echo,

And thus Narcisus thoru daunger and disdeyn  
Vpon this lady dede cruelli vengauce.  
But whan the goddis his cruelte han seyn, 5624  
Towardis hym thei fill in gret greuauce,  
Off his vnmerci thei hadden displesaunce;  
And riht as he merciles was founde,  
So with onmerci he cauhte his dedli wounde. 5628  
For al daunger displesith to Venus,  
And al disdeyn is lothsum to Cupide:  
For who to loue is contrarious,  
The God of Loue will quite hym on sum side, 5632  
His dreedful arwis so mortali deuyde  
To hurte & mayme alle that\* be rech[e]lles,  
And in his seruise founde\* merciles.

and as he was so disdainful they resolved to punish him.

And for Narcisus was nat merciable 5636  
Toward Echcho, for his gret beute,  
But in his port was founden ontretable,  
Cupide thouhte he wolde auengid be,  
As he that herde hir praier off pite, 5640  
Causyng Narcisus to feele & haue his part  
Off Venus brond and off hir firi dart.

5614. &] ye R — to] with R.

5617. dispeired R. 5619. as] and R.

5621. dede] durst R

5622. *Rubric in J, leaf 29 d: "How Narcisus, Biblis, and Mirra, deied atte mischeff." Misplaced owing to transposition of stanzas.*

5623. this] the R. 5624. had R. 5634. that] tho B.

5635. be founde B.



And on a day whan he in wildirnesse  
 Hadde afftir beestis ronne on huntyng,  
 And for long labour gan falle in werynesse,  
 He was desirous to ha[ue] sum refresshyng;  
 And wonder thrustleuh afftir trauailyng,  
 Miht nat endure lengere ther to duelle;  
 And atte laste he fond a cristal welle,

5644 One day,  
 wearied by the  
 chase and very  
 thirsty, he  
 found a spring,  
 and seeing a  
 most angelic  
 image reflected  
 in the still  
 water

Riht fressh spryngyng & wonder agreable,  
 The watir lusti and delectable off siht:  
 And for his thrust was to hym inportable,  
 Vpon the brynkis he fill down anon riht,  
 And be reflexioun, myd off the watir briht  
 Hym thouhte he sauh a passyng fair ymage  
 To hym appeere, most aungelik off visage.

5652

5656

He was enamoured with the semlynesse,  
 And desirous theroff to stonde\* in grace;  
 And yit it was nat but a likenesse,\*  
 And but a shadwe reflectyng off his face,  
 The which off feruence amerausli tenbrace,  
 This Narcisus with a pitous compleynt  
 Sterte into the welle & hymseluen dreynt.

[p. 70] tried to em-  
 brace it in his  
 arms and fell  
 in and was  
 drowned.

5660

And thus his beute, allas, was leid ful lowe,  
 His semlynesse put ful ferre a-bak;  
 Thus whan that he gan first hymself to knowe  
 And seen his visage, in which ther was no lak,  
 Presumptuous pride causid al to gon to wrak:  
 For who to moch doth off hymself presume,  
 His owne vsurpyng will sonest hym consume.

5664 That was the  
 end of Narcis-  
 sus's beauty.  
 Presumptuous  
 pride caused  
 his fall.

5668

And fynali, as poetis telle,  
 This Narcisus, withoute mor socour,  
 Afftir that he was drowned atte welle,  
 The heuenli goddis dede hym this fauour,  
 Thei turned hym into a fressh[e] flour,

5672 After his death  
 the gods  
 turned him  
 into a water  
 lily; and books  
 say that it is a  
 good remedy  
 for sudden  
 fevers.

5644. ronne on] runen in R. 5646. sum] om. R.  
 5647. wonder] om. P, R 3 — thrustleuh] theugh seluth R 3.  
 5651. delitable R. 5652. importable R, H.  
 5654. myd] in myddis R.  
 5657. with] for H, R 3 — semblynesse R.  
 5658. to stonde theroff B. 5659. likenesse] liklynesse B.  
 5663. hymseluen dreynt] hym silff he dreynt R, hym silff  
 dreynt H, so himsilf he dreynt J. 5664. ful] om. H.  
 5668. to gon] go R.  
 5671. as] as thes olde R, as pese oolde H, as these P, as theis  
 olde H 5.  
 5673. a] a ful R.

A watir-lelie, which doth remedie  
In hote accessis, as bookis specefie. 5676

Byblis appeared  
next, together  
with her brother  
Caunus

**A**FFTIR Narcisus was at the well[e] dreynt,  
And to Iohn Bochas declared hadd his wo,  
Biblis appered, with teris al bespreynt, 5680  
And toward hym a gret pas she gan go;  
And hir brother Caunus\* cam also,  
And off o wombe as gemellis tweyne;  
But she toforn hir fate gan compleyne. 5684

whom she loved  
against nature  
and law.

She in hir loue was nat vertuous,  
For ageyn God and Kyndis ordynauce,  
She loued hir brother that callid was Caunus\*;  
And whan he sauh hir froward gouernaunce, 5688

He would not  
listen to her,

He onto hire gaff non attendaunce,  
Thouh she off sleihte tacomplisshe hir entent,  
In secre wise a pistil to hym sent.

although she  
wrote him a  
letter saying  
that she would  
die unless he  
assented.

She seide it was an impossible thyng 5692  
Withoute his grace hirseluē for to saue,  
[And] but he were to hire assentyng,  
She ellis pleynli may non helthe haue  
But onli deth, and afftirward hir graue. 5696  
Thus in hir writyng, to hym she dede attame;  
And to be couert she ne wrot no name.

He paid no  
attention to it,  
and Byblis  
wept so per-  
sistently that  
the gods  
finally turned  
her into a  
fountain.

But whan this pistil cam to his presence,  
Vertuousli therat he gan disdeyne, 5700  
And gaff therto no maner aduertence,  
Nor took non heed off hir furious peyne,  
But suffred hir eternali to pleyne  
Til that she was, as Ouide can weel telle, 5704  
With offte wepyngis transformed to a welle.

Myrrha un-  
naturally loved  
her father  
Cinyras, and

**N**EXT cam Mirra with face ful pitous,  
Which that whilom loued ageyn nature  
Hir owne fadir callid Cinarus, 5708

5676. lelie] like R (corrected in later hand to lillie).

5678. Afftir þat H. 5679. hadd] om. R.

5682. Cannus B, Canus R, Cammus H, Cannus J, Caunus P.

5687. Cannus B — callid was] om. J.

5688. he] she R — gouernaunce] greuaunce R.

5691. secre] sikir R. 5700. therat he gan] began ther at R.

5702. Nor] Neither R, J, om. H — non] nouthir noon H.

5705. wepyng R. 5707. whilom] sum tyme R.

For whos sake gret peyne she dede endure.  
But she ne durste hir sorwe nat discure,  
Til hir norice be signes dede espie  
The hertli constreynt off hir maladie.

5712

For hir norice, off which that I ha[ue] told,  
Conceyued hath, bi open euidence,  
As she that koude bothe off newe and old  
In such materis al hool thexperience,  
That thoruh long labour & sleiht diligence,  
Dyuers meenes & weies out she souhte,  
To hir fadres bed that she Mirra brouhte.

5716

her nurse so  
contrived that  
she accom-  
plished her  
desire,

With whom she hadde hir lust & hir plesaunce;  
For she onknowe lay with hym al nyht:  
He was deceyued bi drunkeleuh ignoraunce,  
And on the morwe, longe or any liht,  
She stal away and went out off his siht.  
With hir norice kepte hir longe cloos,  
Til onto tyme that hir wombe aroos.

5720

deceiving him  
when drunk.

But hir fadir, that was off Cipre kyng,  
Which, as I tolde, was callid Cinarus,  
Whan he the trouthe espied off this thyng:  
That bi his douhter he was deceyued thus,  
She wex to hym lothsum and odious,  
Fledde from his face, so sore she was afferd,  
And he pursued afftir with his suerd.

5724

5728

But as she  
became preg-  
nant, her  
fater found it  
out and was so  
angry that he  
chased her all  
the way to

5732

In Arabie, the hoote myhti lond,  
Kyng Cinarus hath his douhter founde,  
And crueli he gan enhaunse his hond,  
With his suerd tayouen hir a wounde;  
But the goddis, off merci most habounde,  
Han fro the deth[e] maad hire [to] go fre,  
And thoruh ther power transfourmed to a tre.

5736

Arabia, and  
would have  
slain her had  
not the gods  
transformed  
her into a tree,

5740

Whiche afftir hire berith yit the name,  
Callid Mirra, as she was in hir liff.  
Out off which, as auctours sey the same,  
Distillith a gomme, a gret preseruatif,  
And off nature a ful good defensiff,

[p. 71] from which we  
obtain myrrh,  
that is very  
useful for keep-  
ing dead bodies  
from cor-  
rupting.

5744

5710. But] For R. 5711. hir] his R.  
5718. weyes and meenes R. 5722. dronklee R. 3.  
5725. hir longe] hir silff H. 5726. the tyme R, H.  
5734. Arabia H. 5736. he gan] bigan R.  
5737. tayouen] to yiffen R — his] hir H.  
5738. off] om. R. 5743. as] om. R.

To keepe bodies from putrefaccioun  
And hem fraunchise from al corrupcioun.

Myrrh is engendered by the sunbeams.

Bi influence off the sonne-bemys 5748  
Mirre is engendrid, distillyng off his kynde  
With rounde dropis ageyn[es] Phebus stremys,  
And doun descendith thoruh the harde rynde.  
And thoruh the riftis, also as I fynde, 5752  
The said[e] Mirra hath a child foorth brouht,  
In al this world, that yiff it be weel souht,

Myrrha's child was called Adonis, and Venus fell in love with him,

Was non so fair[e] fourmed bi nature;  
For off his beute he was pereles. 5756  
And as poetis recorden bi scripture,  
He callid was the faire Adonydes;  
And to his worshep and his gret encres —  
For he off fairnesse bar awei the flour — 5760  
Venus hym ches to been hir paramour.

and told him not to hunt beasts that were savage. But he paid no attention to her, and was killed by a wild boar,

The which[e] goddesse gaff to hym in charge,  
That he sholde in his tendre age,  
In forestis whil he wente at large, 5764  
Hunte at no beestis which that were sauage;  
But he contrary, to his disauauntage,  
Thoruh wilfulnesse — I can sey you\* no mor —  
Was slayn onwarli off a tusshi bor, 5768

whereupon Venus turned him into a crimson flower.

At the whiche he felli dede enchace,  
But off foli in veyn was his labour;  
For he lay slayn, ful pale off cheer & face,  
Whom Venus turned to a ful fressh[e] flour 5772  
Which was as blood, lich purpil off colour,  
A budde off gold with goodli leuys glade  
Set in the myddis, whos beute may nat fade.

After Myrrha had withdrawn herself, Orpheus, an ugly man, appeared.

AND whan [that] Mirea fro Bochas was 5776  
withdrawe,  
And hadde declarid hir gret aduersite,  
And off hir fate told the mortal lawe,  
Cam Orpheus, ful ougli on to see,  
Sone off Appollo and off Calliope, 5780

5764. at large] alarge R. 5767. you sey B.

5768. tusshi] tuskye R.

5773. as] a R — lich] of R, J — off] the R, be J.

5778. hir] his R.

And appered with a ful doolful face,  
Whilom brouht foorth and iborn in Trace.

Ful renommed in armys and science,  
Famous in musik and in melodie,  
And ful notable also in eloquence.

5784 He was famous  
for his music  
and eloquence.  
Even the rivers  
ceased to flow  
when he sang.

And for his soote sugred armonie,  
Beestis, foulis, poetis specefie,  
Wodes, flodes off ther cours most strong,  
Stynt of\* ther cours to herkne his soote song.

5788

An harpe he hadde off Mercurius,  
With the which Erudice he wan;  
And to Bachus\*, as writ Ouidius,  
Sacrifises ful solempne he began,  
And onto helle for his wiff he ran,  
Hir to recure with soote touchis sharpe  
Which that he made vpon his heuenli harpe.

5796

Mercury gave  
him a harp,  
with which he  
won Eurydice  
back from hell.

But whan that he this labour on hym took,  
A lawe was maad[e] which that bond hym sore,  
That yiff that he bakward caste his look,  
He sholde hire lese & seen his wiff no more:  
But it is seid[e] sithen gon ful yore,  
Ther may no lawe louers weel constreyne,  
So inportable is ther dedli peyne.

5800

He was not to  
look behind,  
else he would  
lose her.

Yiff summe husbondis hadde stonden in the cas  
Ta\* lost her wyues for a look sodeyne,  
Thei wolde ha[ue] suffred and nat seid allas,  
But pacientli endured al ther peyne,  
And thanked God, that broken was the cheyne  
Which hath so longe hem\* in prisoun bounde,  
That thei be grace han such a fredam founde.

5804

But I think  
there are some  
husbands who,  
if a sudden  
look had lost  
them their  
wives,  
would have  
put up with it  
very patiently  
and thanked  
God.

To lyn in prisoun, it is a ful gret charge,  
And to be stokked vndir keie and lok;  
It were weel meriere a man to gon at large,

5812

It is much  
more pleasant  
to be free  
than nailed to  
a block.

5781. appered] appeere H — ful] om. R.

5782. Whilom] Some tyme R. 5783. and] & in R, J, H 5.

5789. Synt of] Styntid B — ther] om. H 5. 5790. herpe H.

5792. Bachus] bochas B, R 3.

5793. ful solempne] solenne R.

5799. bakkard R. 5803. Importable H.

5805. Ta] To ha B — in MS. J. *opposite this stanza in a later hand: "a trew saying."*

5807. ther] the R. 5809. hem so longe B.

5811. lyn] ligge R, liue P. 5812. be] ly H.

5813. meriere] myrie R, merie J, mery H 5.

Than with irenes be nailed to a blok:  
 And there is o bond, which callid is wedlok,  
 Fretyng husbondis so sore, that it is wonder, 5816  
 Which with no file may nat be broke assonder.

However, Orpheus loved Eurydice, and, after all, lost her,

But Orpheus, fadir off armonye,  
 Thouhte Erudice, which was his wiff, so fair,  
 For hir sake he felte he muste deie, 5820  
 Because that he, whan\* he made his repair,  
 Off hir [in] trouthe enbracid nothyng but hair.  
 Thus he lost hire, there is no mor to seyne;  
 And for the constreynt off his greuous peyne, 5824

and never married again. He got off very easily. A man who once escapes the snare isn't apt to go back to it.

At his herte hir partyng sat so sore, [p. 72]  
 The greene memorie\*, the tendre remembraunce,  
 That he neuer wolde wyuen more,  
 So faire he was escapid his penaunce; 5828  
 For wedlok is a liff off most plesaunce.  
 But who hath onys infernal peynys seyn,  
 Will neuer his thankis come in the snare ageyn.<sup>1</sup>

Orpheus gave very important advice to husbands; he said that if one hell is bad, two are worse.

This Orpheus gaff counseil ful notable 5832  
 To husbondis that han endurid peyne,  
 To such as been prudent and trefable:  
 Oon hell is dreedful, mor pereilous be tweyne;  
 And who is onys boundyn in a cheyne, 5836  
 And may escapen out off daunger blyue —  
 Yiff he resorte, God let hym neuer thryue!

But women were not edified by these words, and so they slew him at the festival of Bacchus.

On this sentence women wer vengable,  
 And to his writyng ful contrarious, 5840  
 Seide his counseil was nat comendable.  
 At the feste thei halwed to Bachus,  
 Thei fill echon vpon this Orpheus;  
 And, for alle his rethoriques suete, 5844  
 Thei slouh, allas, this laureat poete.

5814. Irnes R — to] *om.* R. 5815. And] But R, J, H 5.

5816. Fretyng] Fetteryng R.

5817. no] a R, J, H 5, P — nat] *om.* R 3.

5820. he felte] felte that R.

5821. that he whan] whan that B.

5822. in] *om.* R — no thyng enbracid R.

5826. memoire B. 5830. peyn R.

5835. mor] & more R.

5839. On] Vpon R. 5844. rethorik R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 30 verso, in red in margin: "Ob quam cām secundas spreuit nupcias."



And off his harpe yiff ye list to lere,  
 The god Appollo maad a translacioun  
 Among the ymages off the sterris cleere,  
 5848 Wheroff men\* may haue yit inspeccioun.  
 But Fortune, to his confusioun,  
 Denyed hym, froward off hir nature,  
 Whan he was slayn fredam off sepulture. 5852

You can see  
 his harp in the  
 sky, for Apollo  
 translated it to  
 the stars.

**N**EXT Orpheus, ther dede appeere also  
 Off Amazonas worthi queenys tweyne,  
 Marpesia and hir suster Lampedo,  
 Which in conquest dede ther besi peyne,  
 5856 And gret worship in armys dede atteyne,  
 Namyng hemsilff, be writyng nyh and ferr,  
 Douhtren to Mars, which is the God off Werr.

Two queens of  
 the Amazons  
 followed Or-  
 pheus,

Marpesia rood out in regiouns  
 And conquered ful many a gret cite,  
 For couetise off gret possessiouns,  
 Tencrece hir lordshepe, yiff it wolde be.  
 And hir suster kepte surli ther contre  
 5860 From alle enmyes, that ther was no doute,  
 Whil Marpesia rood with hir host aboute. 5864

5860 Marpesia and  
 Lampedo.

But whil she was in conquest most famous  
 And hir enmyes proudli dede assaile,  
 Fortune anon wex contrarious,  
 And caused she was slay[e]n in bataile.  
 Loo, what conquest or victory may auaile,  
 Whan that Fortune doth at hem disdeyne;  
 5868 Seeth heer exaample bi these queenys tweyne. 5872

Marpessa was  
 slain in battle,  
 a common fate  
 of conquerors.

### ¶ Lenvoye.

**T**HIS tragedie remembrith thynges fyue:  
 Off Narcisus thexcellent beute,  
 And off Biblis doth also descryue  
 The grete luxur[y]e and dishoneste,  
 5876 Mirra diffamed, turned to a tre,

These  
 tragedies shew  
 that licentious-  
 ness and pride  
 are very far  
 removed from  
 virtue.

5846. *Opposite this stanza the following rubric in MS. J. leaf 29 b. margin: "Ouidius X<sup>o</sup>. et X]<sup>o</sup>. de transformitis."*

5846. lere] here R, J. 5847. god] god of R.

5849. men] man B, H — yit] clere J, H 5 — haue yit] yitte have cleer R.

5863. lordshippis H. 5865. From] Off R — that] so þat R.

5871. what] om. R. 5876. doth] deth R.

5877. luxurye] luxuride R.

Texemplefie that lecherie and pride  
Been from al vertu set ful ferr a-side. 5880

Orpheus' life  
was of mingled  
joy and ad-  
versity.

How Orpheus endured in his lyue  
Ioie entirmedlid with aduersite;  
In his youthe whan he dede wyue  
He felte in wedlok ful gret felicitye,  
His worldli blisse meynt with duplicite, 5884  
As Fortune hir chaungis gan deuyde,  
Which from al vertu be set ful ferr a-side.

Marpessa made  
war wantonly  
and came to a  
sudden end.

Marpesia, for hir list to stryue 5888  
With wilful werris tencrecen hir contre,  
But hir pompe was ouerturned blyue,  
Whan in bataile vnwarli slayn was she:  
For off al werre deth is the fyn parde, 5892  
So furious Mars can for his folk prouide,  
Which from al vertu is set ful ferr a-side.

Princes, flee  
pride and lust,  
and do not be  
guided by  
avarice. Such  
things are set  
far aside  
from virtue.

Ye myhti Pryncis, lat wit and resoun dryue  
Your hih noblesse to considre and see 5896  
How Fortune estatys can depryue  
And plunge hem down from ther prosperite.  
Pride and luxure, I counsaile, that ye fle,  
Fals auarice ne lat nat be your guide, 5900  
Which from al vertu is set ful ferr a-side.

[Off Priamus kyng of Troye, and how the monke of  
Bury translatur of this book wroot a boke of  
the siege of Troye callid Troye book.] <sup>1</sup>

After this,  
Bochas began  
to think of  
Priam,

**A**FFTIR these compleyntis & lamentaciouns,  
Which [that] Bochas dede in his book compile,  
Medlid among with transformaciouns 5904  
Set in Ouide be ful souereyn stile,  
Whan he on hem hadde musid a long while,  
Seyn the\* maner bothe off ther sorwe & ioie,  
He gan remembre on Priamus off Troie. 5908

5889. hir] his H.

5894. vertues R.

5895. *This stanza is omitted in R.* 5899. luxurye H.

5904. transmutaciouns R.

5907. the] ther B — of ther] the R, H.

5908. to remembre R — on] of R, H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 31 recto.

- First off his berthe and off his kenreede, [p. 73] who was a  
 How among kynges he was most famous; descendant of  
 And as poetis recorde off hym in deede, Dardanus  
 He descendid of worthi Dardanus, and Jupiter  
 5912 Which, as his lyne declareth onto vs, through his  
 From Iubiter was lyneali come doun father  
 Onto his fader callid kyng Lamedoun. Laomedon.
- Off olde Troie this Lamedoun was kyng; 5916  
 Destroied bi Grekis he and his contre.  
 Afftir whom, [this] Priamus regnyng,  
 Made there ageyn a myhti strong cite,  
 5920 Where he ful longe in ful gret rialte,  
 With wiff and childre, most worthi of renoun,  
 With sceptre & crowne heeld possessioun.
- Gouerned his cite in pes and rihtwisnesse, He ruled in  
 And Fortune was to hym fauourable; 5924 peace and  
 For off al Asie the tresour and richesse righteousness
- He dede assemble, this kyng most honourable.  
 And in armys he was so comendable,  
 That thoruh the world as ferr as men may gon, 5928  
 Off hih noblesse the renoun off hym shon.
- This Priamus hadde childre many on, and had many  
 Worthi pryncis, & off ful gret myht; children, of  
 But Ector was among hem euerichon whom Hector  
 5932 Callid off prowesse the lanterne & the lyht; and Troilus  
 For ther was neuer born a bettir knyht. were the best  
 Troilus in knythod so manli eek was founde, knights.  
 That he was named Ector the secounde. 5936
- But yiff I shulde reherse the manheede  
 Off kyng Priam & off his sonys all, But there is no  
 And how his cite besieged\* was in deede, need of my  
 And al the story to remembraunce call, telling you his  
 5940 Tween hym & Grekis how it is befall, story here,  
 The circumstaunces rehersyng vp & doun,  
 To sette in ordre the firste occasioun
- Off the siege, whi it was first laid  
 Bi Hercules and also bi Iason, —  
 The maner hool in Troie Book is said, 5944 for I have  
 already told it  
 as well as I  
 could in the  
 Troy Book,

5912. Dardanus] Dacianus R, Darnamus J, H 5.

5918. this] om. H, R 3.

5921. wiff] his wiff R.

5922. heeld] heeld the R.

5924. hym] om. R. 5925. all of R. 5933. &amp; the] of R.

5935. eek] om. R. 5939. besegied B. 5941. Betwene R.

- Reudli endited off my translacioun,  
 Folwyng vpon the destruccioun 5948  
 Callid the seconde, which, bi acountis cleer,  
 Fulli endured the space off ten year,—  
 For, as me semeth, the labour were in veyn.  
 Treuli also I not to what entent, 5952  
 That I shold[e] write it newe ageyn;  
 For I hadde onys in comaundement,  
 Bi hym that was most noble & excellent  
 Off kynges all[e], for to vndirtake 5956  
 It to translate and write it for his sake.  
 And yiff ye list to wetyn whom I meene,  
 Henry the Fiffte, most myhti off puissaunce,  
 Gaff me the charge off entent most cleene, 5960  
 Thyng off old tyme to putte in remembraunce,  
 The same Henry, for knyhtli suffisaunce,  
 Worthi for\* manhod, reknyd kynges all,  
 With nyne worthi for to haue a stall. 5964  
 To hooli chirch he was chieff defensour;  
 In alle such causes Cristes chosen knyht.  
 To stroie Lollardis he sette al his labour,  
 Loued alle vertues, and to sustene riht, 5968  
 Thoruh his noblesse, his manhod & his myht,  
 Was dilligent & dede his besi peyne  
 To ha[ue] set pes atween[e] rewmys tweyne, —  
 I meene, in sooth, twen Ing[e]land & Fraunce, 5972  
 His purpos was taue had a pes fynall,  
 Souhte out menyys with many circumstaunce,  
 As weel be trete as actis marciall,  
 Theron iupartid goodis, liff and all. 5976  
 But, o allas, ageyn deth is no boone!  
 This lond may seyn he deied al to soone.  
 For a-mong kynges he wasoon the beste,  
 So alle his deedis conueied were with grace. 5980  
 I pray to God, so yiue his soule good reste,  
 With hooli seyntis in heuene a duellyng-place.  
 For heere with vs to litil was the space

which I translated

for King Henry the Fifth, who was a very great man,

chief defender of the church, an enemy of the Lollards, and diligent to bring

peace to England and France.

Alas, he died too soon!

May God give his soul good rest with holy saints in heaven!

5954. MS. J: "the monke of Bury," rubricated in margin, leaf 31 b.

5959, 62. Henry R, H.

5963. for] off B — reknyd] rekene R, J, reken H 5, P.

5967. stroie Lollardis] destrye heritykes R. 5975. be] om. R.

5976. liff goodis R. 5981. so] to R, R 3, om. H.

That he abood; off whom the remembraunce 5984  
Shal neuer deie in Ingland nor in Fraunce.

This worthi kyng gaff to me in charge,  
In Inglissh tunge make a translacioun  
Out off Latyn, withynne a volum large, 5988  
How longe the Grekis lay afor the toun,  
And how that Paris first at Citheroun  
In Venus temple sili dede his peyne  
Ther to rauesshe the faire queen Heleyne. 5992

He bade me  
translate the  
whole story  
from Latin  
into English.  
It tells how  
Paris carried  
off Helen and  
married her,  
how Menelaus  
and Agamem-  
non besieged  
Troy,

In which[e] book the processe ye may see: [p. 74]  
To hym how she was weddid in the toun,  
And off the siege leid to the cite  
Be Menelay and\* kyng Agamenoun,\* 5996  
And many another ful worthi off renoun  
On outhur party, which that in bataile  
Fro day to day ech other dede assaile.

What sholde I telle, or wherto sholde I write 6000  
The deth off Ector or off Achilles?  
Or wherto sholde I now off newe\* endite  
How worthi Troilus was slayn among the pres? —  
The eende off Paris or off Pallamydes, 6004  
Or the slauhtre off manli Deiphebus,  
Or how his brother, callid Helenus,

Told afforn how it was gret folie  
That Paris sholde wedde the queen Heleyne; 6008  
And how Cassandra in hir prophecie  
On this weddyng sore gan compleyne,  
And for the constreynt off hir hertly peyne,  
How she wex mad and ran aboute the toun 6012  
Til she was caucht and shet up in prisoun.

how Cassandra  
foretold the  
evil that would  
follow if Paris  
wedded Helen,  
and how  
they shut her  
up in prison  
for her noise,  
and how  
Cressida for-  
sook Troilus  
for Diomedes.

Alle these materis ye may beholde in deede  
Set bi and bi withynne Troie Book,  
And how Cressaide loued Diomeede, 6016

5986. to] *om.* R.

5989. to fore R. 5992. rauesshe] reioissh R.

5995. to] vnto R.

5996. Menelay] Meneldy R, H 5, meneldi J — and] and be B  
— Agamenoun] Lamedoun B, R, H, J, H 5, R 3.

5998. eithir R.

6002. now off newe] off newe now B, R — now] *om.* J.

6008. the] this R. 6010. this] the R — bi gan R.

6014. these materis] this mateer R, this matter P.

6016. how] *om.* R — Crisseide H.

Whan worthi Troilus she wilfulli forsook:  
Off hir nature a quarel thus she took,  
Tassaie bothe, yiff neede eek wer, to feyne  
To take the thridde, & leue hem bothe tweyne. 6020

Nor will I tell  
how the  
Greeks finally  
won the town,  
and of their  
misfortunes  
in their home-  
ward journey,  
and of Ulysses  
and Penelope.

I [wil] passe ouer and telle off hir no more;  
Nor bi what menys Grekis wan the toun —  
How Eneas, nor how that Anthenore  
Ageyn kyng Priam conspired fals tresoun, 6024  
Nor how Vlixes gat Palladioun —  
The deth off Priam nor Heccuba the queene,  
Nor how that Pirrus slouh yonge Polliceene.

You must read  
the Troy Book.

Nor heer to write, it is nat myn entent, 6028  
Repair off Grekis hom to ther contre,  
Afftir the cite and Ylioun was brent,  
Nor off ther myscheuys thei hadde in the se,  
Nor how Vlixes fond Penelope 6032  
A trewe wiff, thouth he were longe hir fro; —  
Thoruhout al Grece I can reede off no mo.  
Off these materes thus I make an eende:  
What fell off Grekis afftir ther viage, 6036  
To Troie Book the folk echon I sende,  
Which haue desir to seen the surplusage,  
How Grekis first maden ther passage ,  
Towardis Troie, besegyng the cite — 6040  
Redith the story; — ye gete no mor off me.

¶ Bochas ageyn þe surquedous pride of hem that  
trusten in her riches.<sup>1</sup>

O ye proud  
people who  
trust in  
strength, beauty,  
nobility, wealth,  
remember  
Priam's fate!

YE proude folkis that sette\* your affiaunce  
In strengthe, beute or in hih noblesse,  
Yff ye considre Fortunys variaunce, 6044  
And coude a merour affor your eyen dresse

6019. eek wer] wer al so R, were also J, H 5.

6021. wil] *om.* R, R 3, P, H 5 — hir] it J.

6022. Nor] Neithir R, J.

6023. nor] neithir R, J, H 5, P — that] *om.* H, J, P, H 5.

6025, 26. Nor] Neithir R. 6026. of Heccuba R.

6029. to] in to R.

6031. Nor] Neithir R — myscheuys] myscheffe R, myschef J,  
mischief P, myschiffe H 5 — hadden H.

6032. Nor] Neithir R.

6037. the folk echon] tho folke R. 6041. Redith] Rede R.

6042. sette] setten B. 6043. in beute R.

<sup>1</sup>“Here spekith Bochas the Auctour of this book/ a-yenst the  
surquedous pride of hem that trust/ in riches seying thise  
wordys vnto hem.” MS. J. leaf 31 verso.



Off kyng Priam and off his gret richesse,  
To seen how he and [how] his children all  
From ther noblesse so sodenli be fall!

6048

Ector off knyghthod callid sours and well,  
Sad and demur & famous off prudence,  
Paris also in beute dede excell,  
And Helenus in parfit prouidence;  
Troilus in armys hadde gret experience,  
Eek Deiphebus preued manli on his fon:  
Yit in the werre thei wer slayn euerichon.

Hector, Paris,  
Deiphobus,  
Helenus,—all  
were slain.

6052

Hadde nat this kyng, eek as I can deuise,  
Noble Eccuba, which that was the queene,  
A douhter callid Cassandra the wise,  
Hir yonge suster faire Polliceene? —  
Allas, alas! what may such pride meene!  
For al-be-it ther renoun sprang ful ferre,  
Yit were these women deuoured in the werre.

6056 Hecuba, Cas-  
sandra, and  
fair Polyxena,  
— they too  
were deuoured  
in the war.

6060

Was he nat myhti & strong in all[e] thynges,  
And hadde also off his alliaunce  
Riht worthi princis, & many riche kynges,  
And nyh al Asie vndir obeisaunce? —  
Holde in his tyme most famous off puissaunce,  
Most renommed off richesse and tresours,  
Til that Fortune with hir sharp[e] shours,

Was not  
Priam mighty?  
Had he not  
worthy allies  
and almost  
all Asia under  
his rule?

6068

Whan that he sat hiest on hir wheel,  
This blynde goddessse gan hym to assaile.  
Hir froward malice, he felte it ful weel:  
His gold, his tresour first thei gan to faile,  
And dirke gan his roial apparaile.  
Be which exaample all proude men may see  
The onseur trust, the mutabilite,

[p. 75] When he sat  
highest on her  
wheel, Fortune  
cast him down.

6072

Which in this world is seyn & found\* alday.  
Mid off estatiss in ther magnyficence,  
Ebbe afftir flowe maketh no delay,

6076

Each man must  
take his turn  
as it comes  
about.

6047. 2nd how] *om.* R, J, H 5, P.

6054. Eek] Also R — on] *in* R.

6055. euerichon] echone H.

6056. eek] also R. 6059. faire] yong H.

6060. such] al sich R. 6063. Was] What R.

6066. vndir] vndir his R. 6071. began R.

6073. thei] it R. 6074. derken R.

6077. found] founden B. 6078. In myddis of statiss R.

But halt hir cours; there is no resistance: 6080  
 The tide abit nat for no violence;  
 Ech man that standith off chaunges heer in doute  
 Mut take his turn as it cometh a-boute.

Let Priam be a clear mirror to you, proud people, who put your trust in vain glory, that fades as a flower. Let Priam been to you a cleer merour, 6084  
 Ye proude folkis, that sette your affiaunce  
 In such veyn glorie,\* which fadith as a flour,  
 And hath off beute heer noon attendaunce.  
 The world to you cast a ful bittir chaunce: 6088  
 For whan ye wene\* sitte hiest atte fulle,  
 Than will she rathest your briht[e] fethres pulle.

You have had warnings enough of how worldly joy is mingled with dread. Ye han warnyngis for to taken heed 6092  
 Bexaample off other, cleer & riht visible,  
 How worldli blisse is medlid ay with dreed.  
 And yiff your resouns and wittis be sensible,  
 Thyng seyn at eye is nat incredible;  
 And al this doctryn is to you in veyn, 6096  
 Yiff in your tyme ye ha[ue] no chaunges seyn.

Bochas' advice is to leave your vices and have faith in Him who can best help in time of need. Werfore Bochas onto your auail  
 Ful prudentli put you at this issu:  
 First of all he yeueth you this counsail, 6100  
 To leue your vices & take you to vertu,  
 And sette your trust al hooli on Iesu;  
 For he may best in myscheeff helpe, & neede,  
 Off worldli chaunges that ye thar nat dreede. 6104

¶ The preis of Bochas & suerte that stondith in pouert.<sup>1</sup>

When great lords and dignitaries sit highest on their thrones, the hour of their decline approaches. THESE grete lordshipes, these hih[e] dignites,  
 Cheeff thyng annexid onto ther regalie,  
 Whan thei sitten hiest in ther sees, 6108  
 And round aboute stant ther cheualrie,  
 Dreed entreth in, pereil and envie,  
 And onwar chaung[e], which no man may knowe,  
 The hour whan Fortune will make hem loute lowe.

6081. abyde R.

6086. gloire B. 6089. wenen B, R.

6094. wittis & resouns R. 6099. Ful] & H.

6104. chaunges] thynges H — dare not R.

6106, 8. ther] the R. 6111. loute] om. H.

<sup>1</sup> "Here also, Iohn Bochas put a grete preisyng and a commendacioun of suerte pat stondith in pouerte / vnder thise wordis in sentence." MS. J. leaf 32 recto.

Thei may weel holden a statli gret houshold,  
 With a veyn trust ther power sholde ay laste,  
 Clad in ther mantles off purpil, perle & gold,  
 And on the wheel off Fortune clymbe up faste —  
 Lich as she myhte neuer down hem caste;  
 But ay the hiere ther clymbyng is att all,  
 Allas, the sorere is ther onhappi fall.

6112 The more im-  
 posing their  
 household and  
 the greater  
 their state, the  
 more unhappy  
 their fall.

6116

The fal off Priam and kyng Agamenoun  
 Ouhte off riht mor to be compleynynd,  
 Whan Fortune hadde hem pullid down  
 And off hir malice hath at hem disdeynynd,  
 Than yiff thei neuer to worshepe hadde atteynynd;  
 But ther fallyng was the more greuous  
 Because thei wern toforn so glorious.

6120

It were better  
 had Priam and  
 Agamemnon  
 never been  
 kings.

6124

O thou Pouert, meek, humble and debonaire,  
 Which that kepest the lawes off Nature,  
 For sodeyn chaunges thou wilt nat disespaiere,  
 So art thou fraunchised fro Fortunys lure;  
 Alle hir assautis thou lowli doost endure,  
 That she may haue no iurediccioun  
 To interupte thi possessioun.

6128

Poverty is free  
 from the  
 assaults of  
 Fortuna.

6132

Thou settist litil bi al worldli richesse,  
 Nor be his tresours which be transitorie;  
 Thou scornest hem that ther sheltrouns dresse  
 Toward batailles for conquest and victorie;  
 Thou despisist al shynyng off veynglorie,  
 Laude off tryumphes which conquerours ha[ue] souht,  
 With all ther pillages, thou settist hem at nouht.

6136

He sets little  
 store by wealth  
 and scorns  
 conquest, vain  
 glory,

Thou dispreisist al superfluite;  
 Non infortune may chaunge thi corage:  
 And the shippis that saile bi the se  
 With marchaundise among the floodis rage,  
 Ther auentures and ther peireilous passage —  
 Lyff, bodi, good, al put in aventure  
 Onli for lucre, gret richesse to recure —

6140

and all super-  
 fluity. He does  
 not risk his life  
 at sea for the  
 sake of riches

6144

6114. mantell R — perle] perre H. 6118. ther] the R.  
 6119. kyng] of R. 6122. hir] om. R.  
 6125. to fore thei wer R. 6127. lawe H.  
 6128. dispaire R. 6131. iurisdiccio[n] R.  
 6134. Nor] Neithir R. 6136. bataille R — and] or R.  
 6137. dispisith R — off] or R.  
 6138. tryumphe H — souht] wrouht H.  
 6140. dispreisist] despisest H.  
 6141. Non] nor noon H. 6144. 2nd ther] om. R.

or quarrel over  
money and  
rewards, which  
men win only  
to leave for-  
ever.

His wealth is  
patience.

In summer the  
starry sky and  
the green leaves  
are his shelter,

and in winter  
he lies on straw  
without com-  
plaining, and  
sings merrily  
before thieves;  
for he can  
journey from  
land to land  
without fear.

Seneca says  
that Glad  
Poverty is the  
richest of all  
things, content  
in joy and in  
adversity,

Off al such thyng thou takest litil heede, [p. 76]  
Nor off that peple that maneres do purchase, 6148  
Nor off plederis, which for lucre & meede  
Meyntene quarelis & questis doon enbrace,  
Thou hem beholdest with a ful stille face,  
Ther sotil werkynge souht out for the nonys, 6152  
And sodenli departe from al attonys.

Thou canst in litil also haue suffisaunce,  
And art content with ful smal dispenge;  
For thi richesse and thyn habundaunce 6156  
Withoute gruchchyng is humble pacience.  
Yiff any man do to the offence,  
Thou foryetist and lihtli canst foryieue;  
To the suffisith so [that] thou maist lyue. 6160

The sterred heuene is thi couerture  
In somer sesoun; vnder the leuys greene  
Thou makest thi duellyng & doost thiselff assure  
Ageyn gret heetis off the sunne sheene: 6164  
Content with frutis & watir cristal cleene  
To staunche thyn hunger & thi thrustis sore,  
Afftir the sesouns, & carest for no more.

Pouert eek liggith the colde wynteris nyht 6168  
Wrappid in strauh, withoute compleynyng;  
Withoute dreed he go[eth] glad and liht,  
And tofor theuys he merili doth synge:  
He\* goth also withoute paryschyng\* 6172  
Fro lond to lond among[es] poore & riche;  
For freend and fo to hym be bothe aliche.

Moral Senec recordeth be writyng,  
Richest off thynges is Glad Pouerte, 6176  
Euer off o cheer[e], void off al gruchchyng,  
Bothe in ioie and in aduersite:  
Thoruh al the world[e] last hir liberte,  
And hir fraunchise stant in so gret ese, 6180  
That off hir fredam no man will hir displese.

6148. Nor] Or R.

6149. Nor] Neithir R — pletours R, pleters H.

6159. canst] dost H.

6161. thi] the H. 6166. thi] thine R. 6168. eek] also R.

6172. He] She B, J, H, H 5, R 3, P — paryschyng] patisyng  
B, patisyng J, H 5, patisshyng H, parisyng R 3, paryschyng  
R.

6174. hym] her P — be both to hym H — I-lyche R.

6179. lastith R. 6180. hir] his H.

She is norice off studie & off doctryne,  
 In vertuous labour doth hir dilligence;  
 And off sciences, which that be dyuyne,  
 She is callid mooder be clerkis, in sentence.  
 Off philisophres most had in reuerence,  
 Fortune and she so ferr assonder varie,  
 That ech to other off custum is contrarie.

6184 nurse  
 of study,  
 mother of  
 sciences.

6188

Hir hertili ioie is for to lyue in pes,  
 Hateth tumulte, noise and disturbaunce;  
 For hir disciple, callid Zenocrates,  
 In wilful pouert set hooli his plesaunce,  
 Sobre off his port, thoruh whose attemp[e]raunce  
 Ful many a man bexauple off his techyng  
 Wer brouht to vertu fro vicious lyuyng.

6192 Poverty hates  
 noise and  
 tumult.  
 Zenocrates was  
 her disciple.

His diete was so mesurable  
 And deuoid off superfluite,  
 That his corage he kepte ferme & stable,  
 Fro flessfli lustis he was so attempre:  
 Resoun maistred his sensualite,  
 Desirs onleefful for to sette a-side;  
 Duryng his liff Pouert was his guide.

6196 Moderate in all  
 things, guided  
 only by reason,

6200

His abidyng and conuersacioun  
 Was in placis that were solitarie;  
 Mong trees & wellis he bilt hym a donioun,  
 With multitude he hated for to tarie:  
 For Pouerte was his secretarie,  
 Sobre off his cheer & stable off his entent,  
 And in Athenes first to scoole he went.

6204 he loved soli-  
 tary places and  
 built him a  
 retreat amidst  
 trees and flow-  
 ing water.

6208

He was so myhti off auctorite,  
 Rihtwisnesse & iustice to obserue,  
 That rihtful iuges his sentence took at gre:  
 He coude his mouth & tunge so weel preserue,  
 That in the temple onys off Mynerue,  
 Withoutyn oth, onto his sentence,  
 To that he saide the iuges gaff credence.

6212 He was known  
 to be so up-  
 right, that  
 judges accepted  
 his word with-  
 out oath.

6216

6182. 2nd off] *om.* R. 6184. that] *om.* H.

6185. is] *om.* R.

6190. disturbaunce] *perturbaunce* H. 6194. a] *om.* R.

6199. so attempted was he H.

6200. Pat Resoun H — manstried R. 6205. Amonge R.

6206. hated] *hate* hym R. 6209. to scole first R.

6213. so] *ful* R.

Asked why he  
was taciturn,  
he answered  
that silence  
had never done  
him harm.

He axed was among gret audience,  
Whi he was soleyne off his daliaunce:  
His answeere was, that neuer for silence  
Thoruh litil spekyng he felte no greuaunce. 6220  
Spech onavised causeth repentaunce;  
And rakil tungen, for lak off refreynyng,  
To many a man hath be ful gret hyndryng.

Diogenes also  
was a true  
heir of Poverty.  
He lived in a  
litte tun which  
he turned about  
against the  
sun's rays.

Diogenes, trewe heir and next allied 6224  
To wilful pouert be iust enheritaunce, —  
For al richeshe he pleyntli hath diffied,  
It was to hym so gret[e] encumbrance  
With worldli tresour to haue\* alliaunce. 6228  
His duellyng made withynne a litil tunne,  
Which turned a-boute with concours off the sunne,

When king  
Alexander  
visited him,

Hymselff refresshyng with hete off Phebus  
bemys; [p.77]  
For he was content, God wot, with ful lite. 6232  
Kyng Alisaundre, that conquered rewmys,  
Cam ridyng down, & gan hymselff delite  
This philisophre to seen and visite,  
Hymselff sequestred sool from al the pres, 6236  
And cam alone to seen Diogenes.

and offered  
him great  
treasure, he  
said, "pray  
don't take  
from me that  
which you  
cannot give.

Proffred to\* hym gret richeshe & tresour,  
Bad hym aske what thyng that he wolde,  
That myhte hym plese or doon to hym socour; 6240  
But off al that, he nothyng ne tolde,  
But praied hym ful lowli, that he sholde  
Nat drawe from hym þat thyng, ageyn al riht,  
Which for to yiue lay nat in his myht. 6244

"You have no  
lordship over  
the sun, and  
your shadow  
keeps his rays  
from me."

"What thyng is that?" quod Alisaundre ageyn,  
"I ha[ue] be conquest al ertheli tresour wonne."  
The philisophre seide he spak in veyn,  
"Thou hast," quod he, "no lordshap off the sonne. 6248  
Thi shadwe lettith his bemys fro my tonne;

6224. next] *om.* R.

6227. To him it was J, P, H 5 — an encombrance R.

6228. haue] hauen B.

6231. hete] the heete H — hete off Phebus bemys] with the sunne beemys R.

6235. to visite R. 6236. sequestred] requestrid R.

6238. to] vnto B, R, J, P, H 5. 6241. ne] no R.

6242. sholde] wolde H.

6248. off] on R. 6249. lettist R.



And sithe thou hast no power off his liht,  
I pray the freendli, forbarre me nat his siht."

Thouh Alisaundre was myhti off puissaunce,  
And al the world[e] hadde in his demeyne,  
Yit was his resoun vnder thobeisaunce  
Off flesshli lustis fetrid in a cheyne;  
For in his persone will was souereyne,  
His resoun bridled be sensualite,  
Troublyng the fredam off riht & equite.

6252 Although Alexander was mighty, his reason was fettered by sensuality,

6256

For where that will hath dominacioun  
In a prynce, which sholde sustene riht,  
And parcial fauour oppressith his resoun,  
And trouthes title is bor doun with myht,  
And egall doom hath lost his cleer[e] lyht:  
Thouh for a sesoun thei sitte in hih[e] chaieres,  
Ther fame shal fade withynne a fewe yeres.

6260 and where will has domination over truth, fame shall fade.

6264

In this mater mak a comparisoun  
Twen Alisaundre and Diogenes:  
The ton endured but a short sesoun,  
For that he loued werre more than pes;  
And for the tother was nat rech[e]lles,  
But heeld hym content with giftis off Nature,  
Onto gret age his pouert dede endure.

Alexander lasted but a short season

6268

Alisaundre was slay[e]n with poisoun,  
In his triumphes whan he dede excell;  
But in a tonne that lay ful lowe doun  
Diogenes drank watir off the well.  
And off ther eende the difference to tell,  
Alisaundre with couetise was blent;  
The philisophre with litil was content.

and died by poison. Diogenes lived to old age in his tun.

6276

Blessid be pouert, that may endure longe,  
Maugre the fraude & daunger off Fortune,  
Where-as kynges & emperour[e]s stronge  
In ther estat no while may contune.  
And off all vertues rekned in comune,  
Tween indigence and gret habundaunce,  
Is a good mene content with suffisaunce.

6280 Blessed be poverty, a mean between indigence and great wealth.

6284

6250. his] the R.

6251. his] my R. 6258. Troublede R.

6264. charis R.

6267. Bitwene R. 6272. a gret R.

6285. Bitwene R — gret] om. R.

There is no  
assurance in  
riches; lords do  
not have every-  
thing to please  
them.

For with gret plente men be nat assurid,  
Afftir ther lust alway to lyue in ese; 6288  
And thouh that men gret tresour han recurid,  
With ther richesse thei feele many disese:  
Lordis ha[ue] nat all thyng that may hem plese;  
But hertili ioie, philisophres expresse, 6292  
Is grettest tresour tween pouert & richesse.

Diogenes lived  
longer than  
Priam,

For this chapitle sheweth a figure,  
A maner liknesse and demonstracioun,  
How Diogenes lengere dede endure 6296  
Than myhti Priam or kyng Lamedoun:  
Texemplefie, in conclusioun,  
Ther is mor trust in vertuous symplesse,  
Than in presumyng off vicious fals richesse. 6300

and Paris' and  
Helen's mis-  
conduct  
brought all  
Troy to  
destruction.

For thauoutrie off Paris and Heleyne  
Brouhte al Troye to destruccioun;  
Pride & luxure were also menys tweyne  
Whi Grekis leide a siege to the toun, 6304  
And fynal cause off ther confusioun,  
To outhter parti losse off many a man,  
The ground conceyued whi first the werre gan.

### ¶ Lenvoye.

Priam fell  
from riches to  
poverty, from  
kingly honour  
to wretched-  
ness,

**T**HIS tragedie pitous & lamentable 6308  
And dolerous to writen & expresse,  
That worthi Priam, of kynges most notable,  
Was falle in pouert from\* his gret richesse,  
Fro kyngli honour into wrechidnesse, 6312  
Fro sceptre & crowne, & from his regalie  
To myschieff brouht thoruh fals auoutrie.

Hector was  
slain,

Was nat Fortune froward and deceyuable [p. 78]  
For to suffre bi her doubilnesse, 6316  
And bi hir cours, which euer is variable,  
That worthi Ector, flour off hih prowessse,  
Sholde onwarli, most famous off noblesse,  
Be slayn allas, cheeff stok off cheualrie, 6320  
For a quarell off fals auoutrie?

6288. ther lust] lust of hem R.

6292. doth expresse R. 6293. bi twene R.

6301. thauoutrie] the Auarice R. 6304. to] to fore R.

6306. a] om. R. 6307. began R. 6309. &] or R.

6311. from] for B, for al H, J, H 5.

6312. kyngli] knyhtly R. 6316. suffre] suffre hir R.

Agamenoun coumptid incomparable  
 Among Grekis for trouthe & rihtwisnesse,  
 To gouerne most glorious and hable, —  
 Withynne his paleis, the story berth witesse,  
 His wiff Clymestra thoruh hir cursidnesse  
 Assentid was to moordre hym off envie,  
 For thoccasioun off fals auoutrie.  
 Ye noble pryncis, conceyueth how chaungable  
 Is worldli honour thoruh onstedfastnesse!  
 Seeth off kyng Pryam the glori was onstable;  
 Fix in your mynde this mateer doth inpresse,  
 And your corages knyhtli doth vp dresse,  
 Ageyn all titles holdeth chaumpartie  
 Which appertene to fals auoutrie.

6324 Agamemnon  
murdered, and  
all through  
adultery.

6328

Princes, resist  
all things that  
appertain to  
adultery.

6332

[Off mighty Sampson whiche tolde his counsaile  
 to Dalida wherby he was deceived.]<sup>1</sup>

WHO was mor myhti or strong than Samp-  
 son?

6336

Samson un-  
armed slew a  
lion and made  
a riddle on his  
exploit:

Non mor delyuer, þe Bible berth witesse:  
 Withoute wepne he slouh a fers leoun,  
 And for his enmyes to hym dede expresse  
 His vnkouth problem, anon he gan hym dresse  
 Geyn Philistes, and slouh off hem thretti,  
 To paie his promys spoiled hem bi and bi.

6340

His problem was, the text thus rehersyng,  
 Afftir the lettir in veray sothfastnesse:  
 "Ther cam out mete off a thyng etyng,  
 And fro the stronge ther wente out suetnesse."

6344

"Out of the  
eater came  
meat, sweet-  
ness out of the  
strong."

But his wiff, off froward doubilnesse,  
 Which euer wrouhte to his disauail,  
 Off worthi Sampson tolde the counsail:

6348

"What is mor strong than is a leoun,  
 Or mor soote than hony in tastyng?" —  
 But women haue\* this condicioun,  
 Off secre thynges whan thei haue knowlechyng,  
 Thei bollyn inward, ther hertis ay fretyng:  
 Outher thei musten deien or disoure,  
 So brotil is off custum ther nature.

6352

But his wife  
disclosed the  
answer,  
(women must  
die if they  
cannot tell  
secrets).

6356

6322. counted R. 6337. Non] Nor H — Bible] story H.

6341. Ayens R. 6352. haue] han B, R.

6354. boylling inwardis R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 33 recto.

It was, that  
bees made  
honey in the  
head of the  
dead lion.

This was the cas: the leoun that was ded,  
Ageyn the sonne gapyng lay vpriht;  
A swarm off been entred in his hed,  
Off whom ther cam hony anon riht.  
And whan Sampson theroff hadde a siht,  
He fantasied in his opynyoun  
Ful secreli this proposicioun,

6360

Samson's wife  
wheeded it out  
of him,

As ye han herd, and gan it foorth purpose,  
That Philistes to hym it sholde expowne,  
Vnder a peyne the trouthe to hym onclose.  
But with his wiff thei preueli gan rowne;  
And she on Sampson gan compleyne & frowne,  
And feynynгли so longe vpon hym weepe,  
That he nat coude his counsail from hir keepe.

6364

6368

and then told  
the Philistines.  
A plague on  
weeping wives  
who cannot  
hold their  
tongues!

Which whan she kneuh, she made no tarieng,  
But pleyn and hool she gan it to declare.  
Such double trust is in ther wepyng;  
To keepe ther tungen wommen can nat spare.  
Such wepyng wyues, euel mut thei fare!  
And all husbandis, I pray God yiue hem sorwe,  
That to hem tell ther counseil eue or morwe.

6372

6376

"My calf told  
you," said  
Samson. Al-  
though Samson  
was very  
strong, he was  
rather afraid of  
his wife.

She told hem hool, she tolde it hem nat halff;  
And Sampson thanne gan vpon hem smyle,  
"Yiff ye nat hadde herd it in my calff,  
Ye sholde nat a founde it a gret while."  
Who may be seur, wher women list begile! —  
Thouh bookis Sampson off strengthe so comende,  
Yit durste he nat ageyn his wiff offende.

6380

6384

He tied the  
tails of foxes  
to firebrands,  
and set them  
running in the  
Philistines'  
vineyards.

This myhti Sampson dede also his peyne,  
Thre hundred foxis onys that he fond,  
He took her tailes, knet hem tweyne & tweyne,  
And amyde euerich he sette a feer-brond;  
And as thei ran in Philistes lond,  
So furiousli vp and down thei wente,  
That thei her frutis & ther vynes brente.

6388

He killed a  
thousand men  
with the jaw-  
bone of an ass,

Eek be tresoun whan he was onys bounde  
With newe cordis as he lay and sleep,  
Ther cam thre thousand, which that Sampson founde,

6392

6363. secreli] sikirly R. 6368. on] in R.

6377. eue] euen R, even H — or] & H.

6380. ye] she R — it] om. R, H, P.

6389. ran] ronne H. 6391. frute H. 6392. Eek] Also R.

Tamoordred hym, or that he took keep:  
 He brak his bondis, and vp anon he leep, 6396  
 Off an asse [he] cauhte a chaule-bon,  
 And a thousand he slouh off hem anon.  
 He gan to feynte & hadde a sodeyn lust [p. 79] from which he  
 For to drynke, fadid face and cheer; 6400 afterwards  
 And God sente hym to staunche with his thrust drank clear  
 From thassis toth watir cristal cleer, water.  
 Which that sprang out large as a ryuer,  
 Refresshid his sperit, which afforn gan dull, 6404  
 Til that he hadde off watir drunke his full.  
 Afftir he wente to Gazam the cite,  
 Mong all his enmyes, that were off gret myht,  
 To his plesaunce where he dede see 6408  
 A ful fair woman, lay with hire al nyht,  
 And on the morwe, longe or it was lyht,  
 Maugre the wach, vpon his shuldres squar  
 The gatis stronge vp to an hill he bar. 6412  
 And in a vale\* which callid was Soret  
 Ful hote he loued Dalida the faire, Delilah lived in  
 On whom his herte was ful sore set, the vale of  
 She koude hir feyne so meek & debonaire, 6416 Sorek.  
 Make hym such cheer whan that hym list repaire.  
 But I dar calle hir Dalida the double,  
 Cheeff roote & cause off al his mortal trouble.  
 He neuer drank wyne whiht nor red, 6420 Samson never  
 Off Nazarees such is the goueraunce; drank wine or  
 Rasour nor sheer touchid neuer his hed, cut his hair.  
 For in long growyng stondeh ther plesaunce.  
 And this Sampson, most myhti off substaunce, 6424  
 Hadde al his force be influence off heuene,  
 B[y] heris wexyng, that were in noumbre seuene.  
 It was ful secre in euery manys siht,  
 Among peepel told for an vnkouth thyng, 6428  
 Wheroff Sampson hadde so gret myht,  
 Outward shewed bi force off his werkyng.  
 But Dalida with hir flateryng

But Delilah  
found out the  
secret of his  
strength.

6395. To amoordre R. 6399. began R. 6403. that] om. R.  
 6405. Gazon R. 6407. Amonge R. 6408. that he R.  
 6409. ful] om. H. 6410. or] er H. 6411. wach] wachis R.  
 6412. vp to] vpon H. 6413. vale] valei B — was] is R.  
 6415. On] In R. 6421. such] which R.  
 6424. substaunce] puyssaunce H. 6427. ful] om. R.  
 6430. werkyng] wrytyng R.

- Wolde neuer stynte, enqueryng euer among, 6432  
 Til that she kneuh wherbi he was so strong.
- Although fair of face, she was like a snake hiding under flowers. She lich a serpent daryng vnder floures,  
 Or lik a werm that wrotith on a tre, 6436  
 Or lich an addere off manyfold colourz,  
 Riht fressh apperyng and fair vpon to see:  
 For shrowdid was hir mutabilite  
 With lowliheed[e] and a fair pretense  
 Off trewe menyng vnder fals apparence. 6440
- He was honest and faithful; she was otherwise, and wore many colours, He mente trouthe, & she was variable,  
 He was feithful, and she was ontrewē,  
 He was stedfast, and she was onstable,  
 His trust ay oon; she loued thynges newe: 6444  
 She wered colourz off many dyuers hewe,  
 In stede off bleu, which stedfast is and cleene;  
 She loued chaunges off many dyuers greene.
- and shaved off his hair. But to the purpos for to condescende, 6448  
 Whan she off Sampson kneuh al the preuite,  
 Hir falsheed shortli for to comprehende,  
 She made hym slepe ful sofftli on hir kne;  
 And a sharp rasour afftir that took she, 6452  
 Shoof off his her, large and off gret lengthe,  
 Wherbi, allas, he loste al his strengthe.
- Nothing is worse than a secret enemy, especially if it be one's own wife. Damage is erthe is non so greuous,  
 As an enmy which that is secrete, 6456  
 Nor pestilence non so pereilous  
 As falsnesse where he is preue,  
 And speciali in femynyte;  
 For yiff wyues be founden variable, 6460  
 Wher shal husbondis fynden other stable?
- The Philistines put out Samson's eyes and compelled him to grind their corn. Thus Sampson was be Dalida deceyued,  
 She coude so weel flatre, forge and feyne, —  
 Which Philistes, whan thei ha[ue] conceyued, 6464  
 Onwarli bond hym in a myhti cheyne,  
 Cast hym in prisoun, put out his eyen tweyne,  
 And off despiht, afftir, as I fynde,  
 At ther queernys maad hym for to grynde. 6468
6436. eddre R.  
 6438. shrowdid] froward R.  
 6454. his] his gret R. 6457. Nor] Ne R. 6458. he] it R.  
 6464. whan] whan bat H.  
 6467. off despiht afftir] aftir of despite wryten R.  
 6468. ther] the R — maad] thei made R.



Thei made a feste statli and solempne,  
 Whan thei hadde al this tresoun wrouht;  
 And to rebuke hym, scorne hym & condempne,  
 Blynde Sampson was afor hem brouht:  
 Which thyng ful sore greued hym in his thouht,  
 Caste he wolde in his preue mynde  
 Tauenge his blyndnesse sum maner weie fynde.

6472  
 Afterwards  
 they made  
 mock of  
 him at a  
 festival in  
 their temple,

And whan he hadde thus bethouht hym longe,  
 He made a child hym preueli to leede  
 To tweyne postis, large, squar and stronge,  
 Embraced hem, or any man took heede,  
 And gan to shake hem, withoute feer or dreede,  
 So sturdili among his fomen all,  
 That the temple is vpon hem fall.

6476  
 but he upset  
 the pillars and  
 brought the  
 temple down  
 on their heads.

Thus he was auengid on his foon,  
 Which that falsli dede ageyn hym stryue,  
 Slouh in his deieng, God wot, many on  
 Mo than he dede euer afforn his lyue.  
 And he was also, the date to descryue,  
 In Israel, the Bible is myn auctour,  
 Twenti yeer ther iuge and gouernour.

[p. 80]  
 6484  
 Thus dying he  
 slew more men  
 than he ever  
 did before in  
 his life.

6488

## [Lenvoy.]

**T**HIS tragedie yeueth in euidence  
 To whom men shal ther counseil out discur;e;  
 For rakell tinges, for lak off prouidence,  
 Ha[ue] do gret harm to many a creature:  
 Whan harm is doon, ful hard is to recure.  
 Beth war be Sampson, your counsail weel to keepe,  
 Thouh Dalida compleyne, crie and weepe.  
 Whilom Sampson, for manhod & prudence,  
 Hadde Israel in gouernaunce and cure,  
 Daunted leouns thoruh his magnyficence,  
 Made on a thousand a disconfiture;  
 But his moste perelous auenture,  
 Was whan he lay with Dalida to slepe,  
 Which falsli coude compleyne, crie and weepe.  
 Ye noble Pryncis, conceyueth the sentence  
 Off this story, remembrid in scripture,  
 How that Sampson off wilful negligence

6492  
 This tragedy  
 shews that men  
 ought not to  
 tell their  
 secrets.

6496

Beware of  
 Delilahs.

6500

6504

Princes, keep  
 your secrets;  
 let Delilah  
 complain and  
 weep if she  
 must.

6476. Whan] om. H. 6477. to] om. R. 6480. bi gan R.

6485. ful many R. 6486. euer he did R.

6490. in] an R. 6497. Whilom] Sumtyme R.

Was shaue & shorn, diffacid his figure;  
 Keep your conceitis vnder couerture, 6508  
 Suffre no nyhtwerm withynne your counsail kreepe,  
 Thouh Dalida compleyne, crie and weepe!

A chapitle of Bochas discryuyng þe malis of wom-  
 men.<sup>1</sup>

My author  
 Bochas was  
 pleased to de-  
 scribe the  
 malice of  
 women, and I  
 don't know  
 whether it was  
 commendable  
 of him or not.

**M**YN auctour Bochas reioished in his lyue,  
 (I dar nat seyn, wher it was comendable) 6512  
 Off these women the malice to descryue  
 Generali, and writ — it is no fable —  
 Off ther nature how thei be variable,  
 And how ther malice best be euidence 6516  
 Is knowe to hem that haue experience.

He said that  
 they always  
 try to keep  
 men in subjec-  
 tion and seek  
 to replace by  
 art what nature  
 has denied  
 them.

Thei can afforce hem, alday men may see,  
 Be synguler fredam and dominacioun  
 Ouer men to ha[ue]n souereynte, 6520  
 And keepe hem lowe vnder subieccioun.  
 Ful\* sore laboure in ther opynyoun,  
 Bi sotil crafft that thyng to recure,  
 Which is to hem denyed off Nature. 6524

They massage  
 their yellow,  
 wrinkled faces

Bochas affermeth, & halt it for no tale,  
 Yiff thei wante fressshnesse off colour,  
 And han ther face iawne, swart & pale,  
 Anon thei doon ther dilligent labour 6528  
 In such a neede to helpe and do socour,  
 Ther reuelid skyn abrod to drawe & streyne,  
 Froward frounces to make hem smothe & pleyne.

and apply oint-  
 ments to make  
 their cheeks look  
 red, although  
 there is no rose.

Yiff no rednesse in ther chekis be,  
 Nor no lelies delectable and white, 6532  
 Than thei take, tencrece ther beute,  
 Such oynementis as may most delite;  
 Wher Kynde faileth the surplusage tacquite, 6536  
 Thei can be crafft so for hemsilff dispose,  
 Shewe rednesse thouh ther be no rose.

They use hot  
 spices and roots  
 to clear their  
 complexions, and  
 if their bosoms  
 are too flat or  
 too full,

And for to shewe ther face cleer and briht,  
 With hoot spices and oynementis soote 6540  
 Thei can be crafft countirfete a-riht,

6510. Thouh that R. 6516. best] kest R.  
 6522. Ful] And B, J, H 5. 6527. face] faces R, H, P, R 3.  
 6529. do] to R. 6533. delytable R.

<sup>1</sup> vommen B — Same heading in J, leaf 34 b.

Take in such cas many an holsum roote:

Wher Kynde faileth, cunnyng can do boote, —

Yiff ther brestis vp to hie hem dresse, 6544

Thei can ful weel thenbosyng doun represe.

And yiff thei been to soffte or to tendre,

Thei ha[ue] cunnyng to make hem hard & rounde.

Ther corsifnesse thei can eek make sclendre 6548

With poynant sauis that been in phesik founde;

Ther sotil wittis in sleihtis so habounde,

Thyng that is courbid or wrong in mennys siht

To make it seeme as it wente vpriht. 6552

Thei han strictories to make ther skyn to shyne,

Wrouht subtili off gomes & off glaire;

Crafftis lies to die ther her citryne,

Distillid watres, to make hem seeme faire, 6556

Fumygaciouns to rectefie the aiere,

Stomachers and fressh confecciouns

To represe fals exallaciouns.

Off alle these thynges Bochas hath most

despiht,

[p. 81] 6560

Whan these vekkes, ferre Ironne in age,

Withynne hemsilff han veynglori and deliht

For to farce and poppe ther visage,

Lich a[s] peyntour[s] on an old ymage 6564

Leyn ther\* coloures, riche and fressh off hewe,

Wermfrete stokkes to make hem seeme newe.

Ther slak[ke] skyn be craft abrod is streynyd,

Lik an orange fro the galei brouht;

Riche relikes aboute ther neckkis\* cheynyd, 6568

Gold vpon gold, with perle & stonys wrouht.

And that ther colour outward appeire nouht

With wynd or sonne, which sholde hem steyne or  
fade, 6572

For onkynde heetis thei vse citrynade.

they fashion  
them to their  
liking. They  
reduce their  
flesh by  
swallowing  
strong drugs,  
and whatever  
is crooked  
they cause to  
appear  
straight.

They use glair  
to make their  
skin shine,  
alkalies to  
bleach their  
hair, fumiga-  
tions for dis-  
agreeable  
exhalations.

Bochas is most  
scornful when  
these old vekks  
paint and pop  
their faces, like  
craftsmen lay-  
ing colours on  
worm eaten  
wood.

They stretch  
their loose skin  
till it resembles  
an orange,  
hang their  
necks with  
gold and gems,  
use citrinade  
when their  
faces are  
flushed,

6543. can] may R.

6546. And] om. R — been] om. R.

6548. corsiousnesse R — eek] also R.

6549. punyaunt sawis R.

6550, 51 are transposed in R. 6553. 2nd to] om. R.

6555. die] diht R. 6556. watir R.

6564. as peyntours] a peyntour R, J, H 5.

6565. Leyn ther] Leith his B, R, J, H 5, They lein P, Thei  
lay R 3.

6569. nekkis] necke is B, nekke is J, H 5, necke is P.

6570. perlys R.

6571. appeire] appereth R.

and are always  
wanting new  
devices to  
make them-  
selves look like  
Venus.

What sholde I write al ther vnkouth desires,  
Sumtyme froward, sumtyme debonaire;  
Ymagynyng sundry fressh attires,  
Contreued off newe many thousand paire;  
Dyuers deuyses to make hem seeme faire  
In ther apport, be countirfet liknesse  
For to rassemble Venus the goddesse.

6576

6580

They must  
have a new  
gown every day,  
and their hearts  
bleed if one is  
better dressed  
than another.  
Each considers  
herself fairest  
as she pries in  
her mirror.

Off on deuys thei holde hem nat appaied,  
Thei mut ech day han a straunge weede;  
Yiff any be than othir bet\* arraied,  
Off froward gruchchyng thei feele ther herte  
bleede:

6584

For euerich thynkith veraili in deede,  
Amorwe prieng withynne a merour briht,  
For to be fairest in hir owen siht.

They either  
make eyes at  
men or pretend  
shyness, and  
always get  
what they want.

Thei can ther eyen and ther lookis dresse  
To drawe folk be sleihtis to ther lure;  
And sumwhile bi ther frowardnesse  
And feyned daunger, thei can off men recure  
What-euer thei list, such is ther auenture.  
Ageyn whos sleihtis force nor prudence  
May nat auaille to make resistance.

6588

6592

Tears, flattery  
and feigned ill-  
ness bring many  
a man in their  
snare.

With constreynt wepyng & forgid flaterie,  
Subtil spech[e]l farcid with plesaunce,  
And many fals dissemelid maladie —  
Thouh in ther hertis thei feele no greuaunce —  
And with ther couert sobre daliaunce,  
Thouh vndirnethe the double serpent dare,  
Ful many a man thei ha[ue] brouht in ther snare.

6596

6600

Their sweetness  
is full of mor-  
tality, their  
privilege is to  
daunt and op-  
press whatever  
they choose.

O suet[e]nesse ful off mortalite!  
Serpentyne with a plesaunt visage!  
Onstable ioie ful off aduersite;  
O most chaungable off herte & off corage!  
In thi desirs hauyng this auauntage,  
What-euer thou list to daunten and oppresse, —  
Such is thi fraunchise, Bochas berth witnesse.

6604

6608

6577. many a R. 6580. to Venus R.

6583. bet than othir B, R, J.

6589. folkis R.

6590. sumtyme R. 6593. nor] ne R.

6594. to] forto R. 6597. many a R.

Off nature thei can in many wise  
 Off myhti geauntis the power weel aslake:  
 What wit off man can compass\* or deuise,  
 Ther sleiht wilis dar it vndertake,  
 And, yiff hem list, theroff an eende make.  
 Fro this conceit, who-so that discorde,  
 A thousand stories the reuers can recorde.\*

6612 To all that  
 the wit of man  
 can devise they  
 are ready to  
 apply their  
 wiles.

Remembre first, how Hercules most strong  
 Was brouht be women to his destruccioun;  
 The queen Clymestra dede also gret wrong  
 To moordre hir lord kyng Agamenoun.  
 Dalida betraished also Sampson;  
 Amphiorax sanc doun deepe into hell,  
 Because his wiff his counsail dede out tell.

6616 Remember  
 how Hercules,  
 Agamemnon,  
 Samson, and  
 many more  
 men were  
 brought to  
 destruction  
 by women.  
 6620

It nedith nat to make menciou, n,  
 Thouh Phillis deide thoruh impacience  
 Off longe abidyng off hir Demephoun,  
 Nor how that Nisus, kyng off Magarence,  
 Was bi his douhtres cursid violence  
 Onwarli moordred, in Ouide it is told,  
 Whan from his hed she stal the her off gold.

6624 Nor is the  
 scale turned  
 by Phyllis's  
 constancy;  
 think of  
 Scylla, who  
 murdered  
 her father,  
 6628

Bochas rehersith off wyues many on,  
 Which in ther werkyng wer ful contrarious;  
 But among all, he writith ther was on,  
 Queen off Assirie and wiff to kyng Nynus,  
 And be discent douhter to Neptunus,  
 Semiramis callid in hir daies,  
 Which off all men wolde make assaies.

6632 and  
 Semiramis,  
 Ninus's  
 scandalous  
 wife.

She nouthur spared straunger nor kynreede;  
 Hir owne sone was nat set a-side,  
 But with hym hadde knowlechyng in deede,  
 Off which the sclaunder wente abrod ful wide.  
 For with on man she koud nat a-bide,  
 Such a fals lust was vpon hir fall,  
 In hir corage to haue a-do with all.

6640 who had to do  
 with all men,  
 even with her  
 own son.

6610. the] ther R. 6611. compassen B.  
 6613. an ende ther of make R. 6615. recorde] accorde B, J.  
 6616. first] om. R. 6618. Chymestra R.  
 6621. deepe] om H—depe doun to R. 6624. Impacience H.  
 6625. Off] For R. 6626. Nor] Nethir R—Margarence R.  
 6630. rehersith] writith H. 6636. make] take R.  
 6637. nor] no R. 6641. koude] myht H.  
 4642. vpon] on R.

But it wearies  
me to rehearse  
these things.  
It is not right  
to condemn all  
women because  
one or two  
were at fault.

And treu[eli] it doth my witt appall [p. 82] 6644  
Off this mateer to make rehersaile;  
It is no resoun tatwiten women all,  
Thouh on or too whilom dede faile.  
It sittith nat, nor it may nat auaile, 6648  
Hem to rebuke that parfit been & goode,  
Ferr out off ioynt thouh sum other stooode.

Rubies and  
sapphires are  
not the less  
beautiful be-  
cause there are  
counterfeits,

The riche rube nor the saphir ynde 6652  
Be nat appeired off ther fressh beute,  
Thouh among stonys men countirfetis fynde;  
And semblabli, thouh summe women be  
Nat weel gouerned afftir ther degre,  
It nat diffaceth nor doth no violence 6656  
To hem that neuer dede in ther liff offence.

nor are lilies  
and roses the  
less sweet  
though briars  
and crooked  
sticks grow  
among them.

The white lelie nor the holsum rose, 6660  
Nor violettis spred on bankis thikke,  
Ther suet[e]nesse, which outward thei onclose,  
Is nat appeired with no weedis wikke;  
And thouh that breris, and many crokid stykke  
Grove in gardyns among the floures faire,  
Thei may the vertu off herbis nat appaire. 6664

We should  
prize virtuous  
women the  
more because  
there are also  
vicious ones.

And I dar seyn, that women vertuous  
Been in the[r] vertu off price mor comendable,  
That ther be summe reknyd vicious, 6668  
And off ther lyuyng founde also onstable.  
Goode women auhte nat be partable  
Off ther trespas nor ther wikked deede,  
But mor comendid for ther womanheede.

What was  
Scylla to Esther  
or Clytemnestra  
to Alceste?

What is appeired off Hester the meeknesse, 6672  
Thouh that Scilla was sturdi & vengable?  
Nor off Alceste the parfit stedfastnesse  
Is nat eclipsed, but mor acceptable,  
Thouh Clytemestra was founde variable; — 6676  
Lik as whan cloudis ther blaknesse doun declyne,  
Phebus mor cleer doth with his bemys shyne.

6646. tatwiten] to edwiten R — women] *om.* R.

6653. among] ageyn H.

6660. ou ward thei] thei vnward R, thei outward H.

6661. Is] It is R. 6662. many a R.

6666. Been] Seen R.

6670. nor] ne of R. 6674. Alciste R.

6676. Thouh] Thowh that R — Clytemestra H, Clitemnestra P.

6678. with his beemys doth R.



- Ful many on ha[ue] cleene been al ther lyue,  
 Ondefouled kept ther virgynyte; 6680  
 And summe coude ageyn alle vices stryue  
 Hem to conserue in parfit chastite,  
 Deuoid off chaung and mutabilite:  
 Thouh sum other ha[ue] therageyn trespacid, 6684  
 The laude off hem is therwith nat diffacid.  
 And who that euer off malice list accuse  
 These celi women touchyng variaunce,  
 Lat hem remembre, and in ther wittis muse, 6688  
 Men be nat ay stable in ther constaunce.  
 In this world heer is no perseueraunce;  
 Chaung is ay founde in men & women bothe,  
 On outhter parti, be thei neuer so wrothe. 6692  
 No man sholde the vertuous atwite  
 In stede off hym that dede the trespac;e;  
 Nor for a theeff a trewe man endite,  
 Nor for the gilty an innocent manace. 6696  
 Goode and wikked abide in eueri place;  
 Ther price, ther lak, lat hem be reseruyd  
 To outhter parti as thei han disseruyd.  
 Thouh Iohn Bochas in his opynyoun 6700  
 Ageyn[es] women list a processe make,  
 Thei that be goode off condicioun  
 Sholde ageyn hym no maner quarel take,  
 But lihtli passe, and ther sleuys shake; 6704  
 For ageyn goode myn auctour\* nothyng made,  
 Who can conceyue theeffect off this balade.

Many have  
lived all their  
lives in  
chastity: what  
if others have  
trespassed?

And let the  
accusers of  
these poor  
women  
remember  
that men  
are no better.

One does not  
indict an  
honest man  
for a thief.

and although  
John Bochas  
abused bad  
women, those  
who are good  
may shake  
their sleeves  
and pass  
lightly on.

¶ Thexcus of Bochas for his vriting ageyn mys-  
 govern[ed] vommen in stede of lenvoye.<sup>1</sup>

YE women all, that shal beholde & see  
 This chapitle and the processe reede, — 6708  
 Ye that be goode founde in your degre,  
 And vertuous bothe in thouht and deede,  
 What Bochas sei[e]th, tak[e] ye noon heede;

Good women  
should pay no  
attention to  
what Bochas  
says. He  
rebuked bad  
ones only,  
and so

6679. cleene] cleer H. 6683. and] & of R. 6688. in] om. R.  
 6691. in] on H. 6698. lat hem be] lete be R.  
 6705. myn auctour] he B, H, J, R, P, H 5.  
 6708. the] this R. 6709. founde] stonde R.  
 6710. bothe] beeth R — in dede R. 6711. ye] ther of R.

<sup>1</sup> *The same heading in J.* "This balad declareth that no goode  
 woman ouhte off riht to take A quarell ayens Iohn Bochas powh  
 he write a processe ayens hem þat he mys gouerned." MS. R.  
 leaf 41 recto.

For his writyng, yiff it be discernyd, 6712  
Is nat ageyn hem that be weel gouernyd.

this chapter  
does not con-  
cern well-be-  
haved women  
at all.

For thouh it fall that oon, or too, or three  
Ha[ue] doon amysse, as therfore God forbeede  
That other women which stable & feithful be 6716  
Sholde be atwited off ther ongoodliheede,  
But mor comendid for ther womanheede:  
For this scripture, yiff it be concernyd,  
Is ageyn hem that be nat weel gouernyd. 6720

A galled jade  
winces at a  
touch, but good  
women have no  
need to be  
sensitive.

A gallid hors, the\* sooth yff ye list see, [p. 83]  
Who touchith hym, boweth his bak for dreede;  
And who is knowe ontrewre in his cuntre,  
Shrynkyth his hornis whan men speke of falsheede. 6724  
But goode women ha[ue] ful litil neede  
To gruchch or frowne whan the trouthe is lernyd,  
T[h]ouh ther be summe which be nat weel gouernyd.

It is the bad  
ones who are  
scolded.

Off Dalida and queen Pasiphe, 6728  
Thouh doubilnesse dede ther bridil leede,  
Yit off Lucrece and Penolope  
The noble fame abroad doth shyne and spreede:  
Out off good corn men may sum darnel weede, 6732  
Women rebuke, in ther diffautis wernyd,\*  
And nat touche hem that be weel gouernyd.

[Off mighti pirrus that slouh pollicene which for his  
pride and auoutrye deied in pouerte/ slayn atte  
last bi Horestes.]<sup>1</sup>

Among a com-  
pany of weep-  
ing princes,

**B**OCHAS musyng in his remembraunce, 6736  
And considred in his fantasie  
The onseur trust off worldli variaunce,  
Off men & women the chaung and the folie,  
The same tyme he sauh a cumpanye

6713. ayens R. 6716. which] which þat R — feithfull & stable H.

6720. ayens R.

6721. the] this veray B — the sooth yff ye list see] this verrey soth in deede H, þis is verrey sothe in R.

6724. his] om. R. 6727. which] þat H. 6728. and] & of R.

6733. rebuke] rebukid H, rebuked R 3 — in] of H — diffautis] defaute R — wernyd] quernyd B, J, quernyde R, wernyd H.

6737. off] & R.

<sup>1</sup>MS. J. leaf 35 recto.

Off myhti pryncis, ful pitousli wepyng,  
To, hym appeere ther fortune compleynyng.

6740

Among other that put hemsilff in pres,  
Off myhti Pirrus first he hadde a siht,  
That was the sone off worthi Achilles,  
Among Grekis the moste famous knyht,  
Most comendid off manhod & off myht,  
Sone and next heir, [as] bookis specēfie,  
Off Pelleus kyng off Thesalie.

6744

Pyrrhus, son  
of Achilles,  
appeared to  
Bochas.

This Achilles, ful manli off his herte,  
Hurt off Ector, and his wounde greene,  
Slouh Ector afftir or he dede aduerte.  
The which Achilles, for loue off Polliceene,  
Bi compassyng off Eccuba the queene,  
Vnder trete this Grekis champeoun  
Was slayn off Paris withynne Troie toun.

6748

Achilles slew  
Hector, and  
Paris Achilles,  
when he came  
to Troy for  
love of Polyx-  
ena, whom  
Pyrrhus after-  
wards dismem-  
bered

Whos deth tauenge Pirrus in his teene,  
Furiousli, with face ded and pale,  
Slouh afftirward the said[e] Polliceene,  
And dismembrid al on pecis smale,  
Which for to heere is a pitous tale,  
That a knyht so vengable was in deede  
To slen a maide, quakyng in hir dreede.

6756

He koude for ire on hir no merci haue;  
But with his suerd, most furious & wood,  
Merciles vpon his fadres graue,  
Lik a tirant he shadde hir chast[e] blood.  
The deede horrible diffacid his knyhtod,  
That to this day the sclaunder & the diffame  
Be newe report reboundeth on his name.

6760

6764

on his father's  
grave, a hor-  
rible deed.

Poetis seyn, and speciali Ouide  
Writ, whan Grekis fro Troie sholde saile,  
How ther shippis ban anker\* dede ride,  
Off ther purpos which longe made hem faile.  
But in this while, he maketh rehersaile,  
Out off therthe, manacyng off cheere,  
Off Achilles an ymage dede appeere.

6768

6772

6776

Poets say that  
Achilles ap-  
peared to the  
Greeks before  
they sailed  
from Troy,

6741. appeere] appered R. 6742. in] om. R.

6747. as] om. H. 6759. al] hir R.

6763. for ire] om. R. 6767. The] þat H.

6768. diffame] fame R.

6772. ban anker] bananker B, an hankre R, bi an anker J,  
P, H 5.

demanding  
that they make  
a sacrifice of  
Polyxena to  
atone for his  
murder.

To Grekis saide with a dedli face,  
"I feele weel myn honour & my glorie,\*  
And my noblesse ful lihtli foorth dooth pace,  
Onkynde peeple, out of your memorie, 6780  
Which bi me hadde your conquest & victorie.  
Your deuer doth Polliceene to take,  
And on my graue a sacrefise to make.

How she died  
is told in Ovid.

With hir blood looke ye spare nouht 6784  
To sprynge it round aboute my sepulture;  
Thus blood for blood with vengauunce shal be bouht,  
And for my deth, the deth she mut endure."  
And hool the maner off this auenture, 6788  
And how she deied in hir maydenheed,  
Methamorphoseos, the processe ye may reed.

Pyrrhus was  
always blood-  
thirsty; he slew  
Priam and  
carried off  
Andromache.

In hasti vengauunce set was al his ioie,  
With thrust onstaunchid Troian blood to sheede; 6792  
He slouh Priam, the worthi kyng off Troie,  
And into Grece with hym he dede leede  
Andromecha\* — the story ye may reede —  
Weddid hir, and afftir in certeyne 6796  
Be hym she hadde worthi sonys tweyne.

He also became  
a pirate, for-  
sook Androm-  
ache and took  
Hermione.

But in repairyng hom to his cuntre,  
As Eolus dede his shippis dryue,  
I fynde he was a pirat off the se; 6800  
And into Grece whan he dede aryue,  
Fortune onwarli gan ageyn hym stryue:  
Forsook his wiff, leet hir lyue alone,  
Took a-nother callid Hermyone. 6804

Orestes' wife,  
by force. The  
reward of  
adultery is  
always sudden  
death or mis-  
fortune.

Which was that tyme ioyned in mariage [p. 84]  
To Horestes, sone off Agamenoun;  
And he, alas, off wilful louys rage,  
Took hir be force to his possessioun. 6808  
But off auoutrie folwith this guerdoun,  
Sodeyn deth, pouerte or shame,  
Open disclaundre, gret myscheeff or diffame.

6778, 80, 81. gloire, memoire, victoire B.

6779. dooth] do H.

6781. your conquest had H. 6787. she] ye R.

6795. Andromecha] Andromada B, J.

6799. Eolus] solus R. 6802. began R.

6809. auoutrie] Auenture R — this] his R.

6811. disclaundre] Schlaundre R.

Eek in his tyme this Pirrus, as I reede,  
 Fill into myscheeff and gret pouerte;  
 And with such meyne as he dede leede,  
 He was a rouere, and robbed on the se.  
 And as poetis reherse, ye may see,  
 Off such robberyng be slaundre &\* diffame  
 This woord Pirat off Pirrus took the name.

6812 Pyrrhus fell  
 into poverty  
 before he died,  
 and the word  
 pirate is  
 derived from  
 his name.

6816

And as the story afftir doth deuise,  
 The said Horestes gan secreli espie  
 Wher that Pirrus dede sacrefise  
 To for Apollo, that god to magnefie.  
 Ful onwarli Horestes off enuie

6820 Finally he was  
 slain by  
 Orestes before  
 the altar of  
 Apollo.

Took a sharp suerd or Pirrus coude aduerte  
 Wher that he stood, & roof hym thoruh the herte.

6824

This was the fyn off Pirrus in substaunce,  
 For al his pride and gret presumpcioun.  
 Off fals auoutrie folwith this vengauce:  
 Losse off sum membre, pouert or prisoun,  
 Or hatful slaundre bi sum occasioun,  
 Or sodeyn deth, shortli in sentence,  
 Compleet in Pirrus be ful cleer euidence.

6828

That was his  
 deserved end;  
 for he was an  
 adulterer.

6832

[Off Machaire and his suster Canace.]<sup>1</sup>

AFFTIR this Pirrus cam Canace the faire,  
 With teres\* distillyng from hir eyen tweyne,  
 And hir brother, that callid was Machaire;  
 And bothe thei gan ful pitousli compleyne,  
 That Fortune gan at hem so disdeyne,  
 Hyndryng ther fate be woful auenture  
 Touchyng ther loue, which was ageyn nature.

6836

After Pyrrhus,  
 Canace and her  
 brother Maca-  
 reus appeared  
 to Bochas com-  
 plaining pite-  
 ously.

He was hir brother and hir loue also,  
 As the story pleynli doth declare;  
 And in a bed thei lay eek bothe too,  
 Resoun was non whi thei sholde spare:  
 But loue that causith wo and eek weelfare,  
 Gan ageyn kynde so straungeli deuise,  
 That he hir wombe made sodenli tarise.

6840

They loved one  
 another against  
 nature,

6844

6812. Eek] Also R. 6817. &] & be B, R.  
 6832. MS. R omits lines I. 6833 to II. 749. — Compleet]  
 Complaynt H.  
 6834. With teres] Teris B (With teres H, R 3, with teares P).  
 6836. ful] om. J.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 35 verso.

and she had a  
child by him,  
which excelled  
in beauty.

And fynali, myn auctour berth witnesse,  
A child she hadde bi hir owne brother,  
Which excellid in fauour and fairnesse;  
For lik to hym off beute was non other.  
But off ther loue so guyed was the rother,  
That Karibdis, tween wyndis ful contraire,  
Hath Canace destroyed and Machaire.

6848

6852

But when  
Eolus, their  
father, heard  
of it, he almost  
went mad for  
rage,

For whan ther fadir the maner dede espie  
Off ther werkyng, which was so horrible,  
For ire almost he fill\* in frenesie,  
Which for tappese was an impossible;  
For the mater was froward & odible:  
For which, pleyntli, deuoid off al pite,  
Vpon ther trespas he wolde auenged be.

6856

6860

and sought to  
kill them both.  
Macareus fled.  
His sister had  
no means of

The cause knowe, the fadir anon riht  
Caste for ther deth off rigour to provide;  
For which Machaire fledde out off his siht,  
And from his face his presence gan to hide.  
But, o alas! his suster muste abide,  
Merciles, for ther hatful trespas  
Suffre deth; ther was non other grace.

6864

escape, and  
Eolus sent her  
a sharp sword  
in token of  
death.

First hir fader a sharp suerd to hir sente  
In tokne off deth for a remembraunce,  
And whan she wiste pleyntli what he mente  
And conceyued his rigerous ordenaunce,  
With hool purpos tobeien his plesaunce,  
She gruchchith nat, but lowli off entente  
Lich a meek douhter to his desir assente.

6868

6872

Like a meek  
daughter she  
agreed to die,  
but first wrote  
a little letter to  
her brother.

But or she died she caste for to write  
A litil lettre to hir brother deere,  
A dedli compleynt compleyne & endite  
With pale face and a mortal cheere,  
The salt[e] teris from hir eyen cleere,  
With pitous sobbyng, fet from hir hertis brynke,  
Distillyng doun to tempre with hir ynke.

6876

6880

The lettre of compleynt of Canace to hir brothir  
Macharie.<sup>1</sup>

"You are the  
cause of my  
sorrow, once  
chief source of  
my joy.

OUT off hir swouh[e] whan she dede abraide, [p.85]  
Knowyng no mene but deth in hir distresse,  
To hir brother ful pitousli she saide:

6884

6852, 53. Contrarye, Macharye H. 6856. he fill almost B.

<sup>1</sup> The same heading in MS. J. leaf 36 recto.



"Cause off my sorwe, roote off myn heuynesse,  
That whilom were cheeff sours off my gladnesse,  
Whan bothe our ioies be will were so disposid,  
Vnder o keie our hertis to be enclosid.\*

6888

Whilom thou were support and sekirnesse,  
Cheeff reioisshyng off my worldli plesaunce;  
But now thou art the ground off my siknesse,  
Welle off wanhope, off my dedli penaunce,  
Which haue off sorwe grettest habundaunce  
That euer yit hadde any creature,  
Which mut for loue the deth alas endure!

6892

"Alas, I must  
endure death  
for loue!

Thou were whilom my blisse & al my trust,  
Souereyn confort my sorwes to appese,  
Spryng and well off al myn hertis lust;  
And now, alas, cheeff roote off my disese.  
But yiff my deth myht do the any ese,  
O brother myn, in remembraunce off tweyne,  
Deth shal to me be plesaunce & no peyne.

6896

"But if my  
death be of  
avail to you,  
my brother, it  
will be a  
pleasure and  
no pain.

6900

Mi cruel fader, most onmerciabie,  
Ordeyned hath, it needis mut be soo,  
In his rigour he is so ontretable,  
Al merciles he will that it be doo, —  
That we algate shal deie bothe too.  
But I am glad, sithe it may been noon other,  
Thou art escapid, my best beloued brother.

6904

"My cruel  
father has or-  
dained that  
both of us  
must die, and  
I am glad you  
escaped.

6908

This is myn eende, I may it nat asterte,  
O brother myn, there is no mor to seye,  
Lowli besechyng with al myn hool[e] herte  
For to remembre speciali I preie,  
Yiff it befall my litil sone deie,  
That thou maist afftir sum mynde vpon us haue,  
Suffre us bothe be buried in o graue.

6912

"And if my  
little son also  
die, I beg you  
not to forget  
us.

6916

I holde hym streihtli atwen myn armys tweyne,  
Thou and Nature leide on me this charge;  
He gilt[e]les with me mut suffre peyne.  
And sithe thou art at fredam and at large,  
Lat kynd[e]nesse our loue nat so discharge,  
But haue a mynde, where-euer that thou be,  
Onys a day vpon my child and me.

6920

"Let us both  
be buried in  
one grave, and  
wherever you  
may be have a  
mind on us  
once a year.

6888. enclosid] onclosid B.

6895. allas be deth H, R 3. 6901. off] of us R 3.

"It is not just  
that our young  
child should  
suffer;

On the and me dependith the trespase  
Touchyng our gilte\* and our gret offence;  
But, wellaway, most angelik off face,  
Our yonge child in his pur innocence  
Shal ageyn riht suffre dethis violence,  
Tendre off lymes, God wot, ful gilt[e]les,  
The goodli faire that lith heere specheles.

6924

6928

he lies still as  
a lamb, only a  
heart of steel  
could do him  
injury.

A mouth he hath, but woordis hath he noone,  
Cannat compleyne, alas, for non outrage,  
Nor\* gruchith nat, but lith heer al a-loone,  
Stille as a lamb, most meek off his visage.  
What herte off steel coude doon to hym damage,  
Or suffre hym deie, beholdyng the maneer  
And look benygne off his tweyne eyen cleer?

6932

6936

"My father,  
your revenge is  
too cruel!

O thou, my fader, to cruel is thi wreche,  
Hardere off herte than tigre\* or leoun,  
To slen a child that lith withoute speche,  
Void off al mercy and remissioun.  
And on his mooder hast no compassioun,  
His youthe considred, with lippis softe as silk,  
Which at my brest lith still & souketh mylk.

6940

6944

"Was there  
ever creature  
who felt more  
dole than I?

Ys any sorwe remembrid be writyng,  
Onto my sorweful sihhes comparable?\*

Or was ther euer creature lyuyng  
That felte off dool a thyng mbr lamentable?  
For counfortles and onrecuperable  
Ar thilke hepid sorwes, ful off rage,  
Which han with wo oppressid my corage.

6948

"My father is  
a mortal enemy,  
who seeks our  
destruction.

Rekne all myscheuys in especial,  
And on my myscheeff remembre & ha[ue] good mynde:  
Mi lord my fadir, is myn enemy mortall,  
Experience inouh theroff I fynde;  
For in his pursuit he hath lefft behynde,  
In destruccioun off the, my child and me,  
Routhe and al mercy and fadirli pite.

6952

6956

"Alas, my  
brother, that  
vengeance  
should come  
before mercy.

And the, my brother, auoidid from his siht,  
Which in no wise his grace maist atteyne,  
Alas that rigour, vengauce & cruel riht

6960

6924. me & the H. 6925. gilte] gile B, J, H.  
6930. that] which H, R 3. 6933. Nor] Nar B.  
6939. tigre] any tigre B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P.  
6946. comparable] incomparable B, J, H 5.  
6952. my myschevis J. 6956. his] this H.  
6961. vengauce Rigour H.

- Sholde a-boue merci be lord &\* souereyne!  
 But cruelte doth at me so disdeyne,  
 That thou, my brother, my child & also I  
 Shal deie alas exiled\* from al mercy. 6964
- Mi fader whilom, be many sundri signe,  
 Was my socour, my supportacioun,  
 To the and me most gracieux & benygne,  
 Our worldli gladnesse, our consolacioun. 6968  
 But loue and Fortune ha[ue] turned up-so-doun  
 Our grace, alas, our welfare & our fame,  
 Hard to recure, so sclaunderid is our name. 6972
- Spot off diffamyng is hard to wasshe away,  
 Whan noise and rumour abrod do folk manace;  
 To hyndre a man ther may be no delay:  
 For hatful fame fleeth ferr in ful short space. 6976  
 But off vs tweyne ther is non othir grace  
 Sauff onli deth, and afftir deth, alas,  
 Eternal sclauandre off vs; thus stant the cas.
- Whom shal we blame, or whom shal we atwite 6980  
 Our gret offence, sithe we may it nat hide?  
 For our excus reportis to respite  
 Mene is ther non, except the god Cupide.  
 And thouh that he wolde for vs prouide, 6984  
 In this mateer to been our cheeff refuge,  
 Poetis seyn he is blynd to been a iuge.
- He is depeynt[e] lich a blynd archer,  
 To marke ariht failyng discrecioun,  
 Holdyng no meseur, noutherr ferr nor neer;  
 But lik Fortunys disposicioun,  
 Al upon happ, void off al resoun,  
 As a blynd archer with arwes sharp[e] grounde 6992  
 Off auenture yeueth many a mortal wounde.
- At the and me he wrongli dede marke,  
 Felli to hyndre our fatal auentures,  
 As ferr as Phebus shynyth in his arke, 6996  
 To make us refus to alle creatures,  
 Callid us tweyne onto the woful lures  
 Off diffame, which will departe neuere,  
 Be newe report the noise encresyng euere. 7000

[p. 86] "Our father  
 was once be-  
 nign and  
 gracious to us,  
 but now our  
 name is spotted  
 with slander,  
 which is hard  
 to wash away.

6980 "Whom shall  
 we blame but  
 the god Cupid,

6988 who is blind  
 and knows not  
 where his  
 arrows strike.

"He did wrong  
 to aim at us.

6962. lorde &] ladi B, J, P, H 5, R 3.

6965. exiled alas B, J, H 5, P. 6968. gracious J, P, R 3, H 5.

6992. I grownde H. 6997. us] om. H.

"Evil report  
flies with swift  
wings, and  
good fame is  
hindered by  
envy. No  
man complains  
of his own  
faults.

Odious fame with swift wengis fleeth,  
But al good fame envie doth restreyn;  
Ech man off other the diffautis seeth,  
Yit on his owne no man will compleyne.  
But al the world out crieth on vs tweyne,  
Whos hatful ire bi us may nat be queemyd;  
For I mut deie, my fader hath so deemyd.

7004

"Now I must  
take leave of  
you for ever.

Now farweel, brother, to me it doth suffice  
To deie allone for our bothe sake.  
And in my moste feithful humble wise,  
Onto my dethward thouh I tremble & quake,  
Off the for euer now my leue I take.  
And onys a yeer, forget nat, but take heed,  
Mi fatal day this lettre for to reed.

7008

7012

"Have mind on  
me once a  
year, wear  
black that day  
and do not  
disdain to let  
fall some tears  
on my grave."

So shaltow han on me sum remembraunce,  
Mi name enprentid in thi kalender,  
Bi rehersaile off my dedli greuauance;  
Were blak that day, & mak a doolful cheer.  
And whan thou comest & shalt approche neer  
Mi sepulture, I pray the nat disdeyne  
Vpon my graue summe teris for to reyne."

7016

7020

Her sorrow was  
more for her  
child than for  
herself, and

¶ Wrytyng hir lettir, awappid al\* in dreede,  
In hir riht hand hir penne gan to quake;  
And a sharp suerd to make hir herte bleede  
In his lefft hand, hir fader hath hir take.  
And most hir sorwe was for hir childes sake,  
Vpon whos face in hir barm slepyng  
Ful many a teer she wepte in compleynyng.

7024

7028

with a sword  
that her father  
placed in her  
hand she  
pierced her  
heart.

Afftir al this, so as she stood and quook,  
Hir child beholdyng, myd off hir peynes smerte,  
Withoute abood the sharp[e] suerd she took  
And rooff hirself euene to the herte.  
Hir child fill doun, which snyht[e] nat asterte,  
Hauyng non helpe to socoure hym nor saue,  
But in hir blood the silff began to bathe.

7032

Eolus then  
commanded  
that the child  
should be de-  
voured by dogs.

And thanne hir fader, most cruel off entent,  
Bad that the child sholde anon be take,  
Off cruel houndis in haste for to be rent  
And be deuoured for his mooder sake.  
Off this tragedie thus an eende I make,

7036

7040

7019. shalt] shal H. 7022. al] and B, J. 7024. a] om. H  
7025. his] hir H. 7035. But] om. H, R 3.

Processe off which, men may reede and see,  
Concludith on myscheeff & furious cruelte.

Remembryng first, as maad is menciou<sup>n</sup>,  
How that Pirrus delited hym in deede,  
Whan Troie was brouht to destruccioun,  
With cruel suerd[e] Troian blood to sheede,  
But of such slauhtre, seeth heer the cruel meede,  
As riht requereth, bi vnwar violence,  
Blood shad for blood is fynal recompence.

7044

This tragedy  
tells of mis-  
fortune and  
furious cruelty,  
which is pun-  
ished in the  
end.

7048

### Lenvoye.

**W**HAN surquedie oppressid hath pite, [p. 87]  
And meeknesse is with tirannie bor doun

Ageyn al riht, &\* hasty cruelte  
To be vengable maketh no dilacioun,  
What folweth theroff? — be cleer inspeccioun,  
Seeth an exauple how Pirrus in his teene  
Off hatful ire slouh yonge Polliceene.

7052

When pride  
oppresses pity  
against right,  
and rigour  
grants no  
delay,  
misfortune  
follows.

7056

Kyng Eolus to rigerous was, parde,  
And to vengable in his entencioun  
Ageyn his childre Machaire & Canace,  
So inportable was his punycioun,  
Off haste procedyng to ther destruccioun;  
Wers in his ire, as it was weel seene,  
Than cruel Pirrus, which slouh Polliceene.

7060

King Eolus  
was even  
worse in his  
rage than  
Pyrrhus.

Noble Pryncis, prudent and attempre,  
Differrith vengauce, off hih discrecioun;  
Til your ire sumwhat asuagid be,  
Doth neuer off doom non execucioun:  
For hate and rancour perturben the resoun  
Off hasty iuges, mor off entent oncleene  
Than cruel Pirrus which slouh Polliceene.

7064

Noble Princes,  
always defer  
vengeance  
until the heat  
of your anger  
is gone.

7068

7070

¶ Explicit liber primus.

¶ Incipit prologus libri secundi.<sup>1</sup>

7047. slauhtre seeth] *om.* H.

7052. Ageyn al riht &] And ageyn riht B, H.

7061. haste] hasty H. 7062. his] *om.* H. 7067. non] *om.*  
H, R 3.

<sup>1</sup> The same rubric in MS. J. leaf 38 recto.

## BOOK II

### [Prologue.]

Some people  
may think that  
I have told  
enough trage-  
dies,

**T**O summe folk, parcas, it wolde seeme, [p. 87b]  
Touchyng the chaunges & mutabilites  
Bi me rehersed, that thei myhte deeme,

Off Fortunes straunge aduersites 4  
To pryncis shewed, doun pullid from ther sees,  
The tragedies auhte inouh suffice  
In compleynyng, which ye han herd deuise.

for it is de-  
pressing when  
no joy is  
mingled with  
pain,

The stori pitous, the processe lamentable, 8  
Void off ioie, al gladnesse and\* plesaunce,  
A thyng to greuous and to inportable,  
Where-as no merthe is medlid with greuaunce,  
Al upon compleynt standith thalliaunce, 12  
Most whan Fortune, who that hir cours weel knewe,  
Chaungith old ioie into sorwes newe.

and worst of all  
when former  
gladness is  
turned into  
new sorrow.

For onto hym that neuer wiste off wo,  
Remembraunce off his old gladnesse, 16  
Whan his weelfare & plesaunce is ago,  
And neuer aforne knew off non heuynesse, —  
Such vnwar chaung, such vnkouth wrechidnesse  
Causith in pryncis, thoruh newe dedli trouble, 20  
Afftir ther fallyng ther sorwes to be double.

But old exam-  
ples of princes  
who have fallen  
teach all estates  
how to avoid  
vices.

Olde exaumples off pryncis that ha[ue] fall,  
Ther remembraunce off newe brouht to mynde,  
May been a merour to estatiss all, 24  
How thei in vertu shal remedies fynde  
Teschewe vices, off such as wer maad blynde,  
Fro sodeyn fallyng hemsiluen to preserue,  
Longe to contune and thank off God disserue.\* 28

The fall of one  
is a bright  
lantern to an-  
other, for as  
men deserve, so  
are they re-  
warded.

The fall off on is a cleer lanterne  
To teche a-nother what he shal eschewe;  
Pereil off on, is, who can discernen,  
Schoole and doctryn from pereil to remewe. 32  
As men disserue such guerdoun ther mut sewe;

9. and] and al B, J, H 5.

14. chaungyng H — Ioies J, ioies H 5, P.

20. Causid H. 24. to] of H, R 3.

28. disserue] to disserue B, J, P, H 5.

33. ther] om. J, H 5 — ther mut] mvt thei H.



In vice nor vertu no man may God deceyue,  
Lik ther desertis ther meede thei [shal] receyue.

Who folweth vertu lengest doth perseuere,  
Be it in riches, be it in pouerte;  
Liht off trouthe his cleerneske kepith euere  
Ageyn thassautis off al aduersite.

36 Those who fol-  
low virtue  
endure longest,  
for virtue is  
the source of  
prosperity.

Vertu is cause off long prosperite;  
And whan pryncis fro vertu doun declyne,  
Ther fame is shroudid vnder the cliptik lyne.

40

For fals Fortune, which turneth as a ball, [p. 88]  
Off vnwar chaunges thouh men hir wheel atwite,  
It is nat she that pryncis gaff the fall,  
But vicious lyuyng, pleyntli to endite:  
Thouh God aboue ful ofte hem doth respite,  
Longe abidith, and doth his grace sende  
To this entent, thei sholde ther liff amende.

44 It is not  
Fortuna who  
causes princes  
to fall, but  
vicious living,

48

For ther weelfare and ther abidyng longe,  
Who aduertisith, dependith nat on chaunce.  
Good liff and vertu maketh hem to be stronge,  
And hem assureth in long perseueraunce;  
Vertu on Fortune maketh a diffiaunce,  
That Fortune hath no domynacioun  
Wher noble pryncis be gouerned be resoun.

52 and Fortuna  
has no  
power over  
princes who  
are governed  
by reason.

56

But such as list[e] nat correctid be  
Bexauple off othre fro vicious gouernaunce,  
And fro ther vices list nat for to fle:  
Yiff thei be troubled in ther hih puissaunce,  
Thei arette it Fortunys variaunce,  
Touchyng the giltes that thei deden vse,  
Ther demerites ful falsli to excuse.

60 Those who will  
not learn to  
abandon their  
evil ways by  
the example  
of others,  
wrongly  
ascribe their  
fall to  
Fortune's  
variance,

Vertu conserueth pryncis in ther glorie \*  
And confermeth ther dominaciouns;  
And vicis put ther price out off memorie,  
For ther trespassis and ther transgressiouns.  
And in alle such sodeyn mutaciouns,  
Thei can no refut nor no bet socour,  
But ageyn Fortune to maken ther clamour.

64 and know no  
better than to  
make an  
outcry against  
her deceitful-  
ness, as if  
they them-  
selves were  
innocent.

68

35. shal] *om.* J, H 5.

44. vnwar] soden H — wheel] will H.

49. thei] bat thei H.

63. ful] *om.* H — to] *om.* J, H 5. 64, 66, gloire, memoire B.

67. 2nd ther] *om.* H.

Make an outcri on hir doubilnesse,  
 As no gilt were in ther owne deede; 72  
 Thus ontreuli thei calle hir a goddessse,  
 Which lite or nouht may helpe at such a neede.  
 But yiff thei hadde God in loue & dreede,  
 Trustid his lordshep in herte, will & thouht, 76  
 Thei sholde Fortune pleyntli sette at nouht.

Many stories  
 have already  
 been told, which  
 shew princes  
 how they may  
 profit by others'  
 falling.

Euidencis ful expert and palpable,  
 Toform rehersed, told off dyuers ages,  
 Worldli glorie\* veyn and ful onstable, 80  
 With deceites double off ther visages,  
 Shewyng to pryncis ferme off ther corages,  
 Be these exaumples, how and in what wise  
 By othris\* fallyng thei shal hemsilff chastise. 84

Comets, strange  
 constellations,  
 lightning and  
 thunder and  
 rumbling of the  
 earth are all  
 signs bidding  
 mighty princes  
 beware and  
 amend their  
 lives before it  
 is too late.

Signes shewed and toknes in the heuene,  
 Dyuers cometis and constellaciouns,  
 Dreedful thundryng, feerful firi leuene, 88  
 Rumour in erthe and gret discenciouns,  
 Disobeisaunce in sondry regiouns,  
 Shewen exaumples, ful weel afferme I dar,  
 To myhti pryncis, hem bidding to be war,  
 Ther liff tamende or the Lord do smyte, 92  
 Thoruh negligence or it be to late;  
 And or the suerd off vengauñce kerue & bite,  
 Into vertues ther vicious liff translate,  
 Cherisshe rihtwisnesse, ageyn al wrong debate, 96  
 With dreed off God make hemsiluen stronge:  
 Than is no doubte thei shal enduren longe.

Indurate the  
 heart that cannot  
 profit by the fate  
 of other men.

Who is nat war bi othres chastisyng,  
 Othre bi hym shal chastised be: 100  
 Hard is is that herte, which for no writyng,  
 For no dottryn nor non auctorite,  
 For non exaumples will frem his vices flee;  
 To indurat is his froward entent, 104  
 Which wil nat suffre his hardnesse to relent.

Soft raindrops  
 pierce hard  
 stones,

The rounde dropis off the smothe reyn,  
 Which that discende & falle from aloffte

80. gloire B — veyn] full veyn H.

83. how and in what wise] full wele afferme I dare H (*but corrected later*).

84. By othris] Bothris B — To myhti princis hem bidding to be war H.

94. &] or H. 100. shal chastised] chastised shal H.

On stonys harde, at eye as it is seyn,  
 Perceth ther hardnesse with ther fallyng offte,  
 Al-be in touchyng, water is but soffte;  
 The Percyng causid be force nor puissaunce,  
 But off fallyng be long contynuaunce.

108

112

Semblabli, off riht I dar reherse,  
 Offte reedyng on bookis fructuous  
 The hertis sholde off prudent pryncis perse,  
 Synke in ther mynde & make hem vertuous  
 Teschewe all thyng that is vicious:  
 For what auaieth thexamples that thei reede,  
 To ther reedyng yiff contraire be the deede?

116

and the frequent reading  
 of good books  
 ought to make  
 princes  
 virtuous.

Cunnyng and deede, who can comprehende,  
 In cleer conceites thei be thynges tweyne;  
 And yiff cunnyng doth the deede amende,  
 Than atwen hem is maad a myhti cheyne,  
 A noble thyng, and riht souereyne:  
 For thanne off cunnyng the labour is weel spent,  
 Whan deede folweth, & bothe been off assent.

120

If actions are  
 governed by  
 true knowledge  
 one's labour  
 is well spent.

124

Thus Iohn Bochas procedyng in his book,  
 Which in noumbre is callid the secounde,  
 Gan for to write, and his purpos took  
 To sette in stories such as he hadde founde,  
 Off entent alle vices to confounde  
 Be thexamples which he dede expresse.  
 And at the gynnyng off his besynesse,

[p. 89]

128

Thus John  
 Bochas begins  
 his Second  
 Book.

132

Myhti Saul to hym dede appeere,  
 Kyng off Israel, pitousli wepyng,  
 Dedli off face, and with an hidous cheere,  
 His vois Ibroke be manyfold sobbyng;  
 And to myn auctour his sorwe compleynyng,  
 Requeryng hym, togidre whan thei mette,  
 First in his book his woful fate to sette.

136

First Saul appeared,  
 begging  
 him, in a voice  
 broken by sobs,  
 to write his  
 story.

140

Anon afftir, I off entencioun,  
 With penne in hande faste gan me speede,  
 As I koude, in my translacioun,  
 In this labour ferthre to proceede,  
 My lord cam forbi, and gan to taken heede;

144

And whilst I  
 continued in  
 my translation,  
 my lord, Duke  
 Humphrey,  
 came by and  
 bade me set an  
 envoy at the  
 end of each

126. off] at H, R 3. 127. Thus] This H. 129. and] In H.

130. hadde] hath H.

136. an hidous] a pitouse H, a pitous R 3.

140. to] om. H, R 3.

This myhti prynde, riht manli & riht wis,  
 Gaff me charge in his prudent auys,  
 That I sholde in eueri tragedie, 148  
 Afftir the processe made mencionn,  
 At the eende sette a remedie,  
 With a lenvoie conueied be resoun,  
 And afftir that, with humble affeccionn, 152  
 To noble pryncis lowli it directe,  
 Bi othres fallyng [thei myht] themsilff correcte.\*  
 And I obeied his biddyng and plesaunce,  
 Vnder support off his magnyficence. 156  
 As I coude, I gan my penne auauce,  
 Al-be I was bareyn off eloquence,  
 Folwyng myn auctour in substaunce & sentence:  
 For it suffised, pleyntli, onto me, 160  
 So that my lord my makyng took at gre.

tragedy for the  
 advantage  
 of noble princes;

and, to please  
 my lord, I  
 obeyed, al-  
 though barren  
 of eloquence.

¶ Finis prologi libri secundi.

¶ Sequitur liber secundus.

[How Saul, Kyng of Ierusalem born of low degre as  
 long as he dred god was obedient to him/ and  
 rewlid by good counsaile had many grete dis-  
 confitures/ but atte last/ for his pride presump-  
 cioun and grete disobysaunce/ he lost his crowne  
 and was slayn by Philestees.]<sup>1</sup>

Saul was born  
 of the line of  
 Benjamin.  
 Once, when  
 seeking his  
 father's asses,

THIS said[e] Saul, of whom I spak toforn, [p. 91]  
 Ful weel compact & large of his stature,  
 Off the lyne of Beniamyn eek born, 164  
 His fader Ceis was callid in Scripture,  
 Whos assis whilom lefte\* ther pasture; —  
 Space off thre daies Saul hadde hem souht,  
 Loste his labour and ne fond hem nouht. 168  
 For thei were gon out so ferr a-stray,  
 So disseuered he ne koude hem meete,  
 Til that a child hym suyng al the way  
 Gaff hym counseil his labour for to lete, 172  
 And that he sholde gon to the prophete,  
 Which was ful famous holde in Israel,  
 Off whom the name was callid Samuel.

a child  
 counselled  
 him to leave off  
 and repair to  
 Samuel,

154. correcte] to correcte B.

166. lefte] leffen B, leften J, lost H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 38 recto. as long] aslong J.

- Which Saul made in his hous to dyne,  
 Receyued hym off gret affeccoun;  
 And be precept & ordenaunce deuyne,  
 Samuel made no prolongacioun,  
 But shadde the hooli sacred vnccioun  
 Vpon the hed off Saul, down knelyng,  
 And ful deuoutli off Israel made hym kyng,  
 Off goddis peeple to ha[ue] the gouernaunce,  
 With sceptre & crowne, and hool the regalie.  
 And his noblesse mor myhtili tauaunce,  
 With meek[e]nesse to reule his monarchie,  
 God gaff to hym a sperit off prophecie,  
 Which was gret glorie\* to his magnyficence,  
 Off futur thynges to haue prescience.
- And whil that he was meek & humble in deede,  
 Void off pride and fals presumpcioun,  
 And prudent counsail with hym dede leede,  
 Hym to gouerne bi good discrecioun,  
 He fond quiete thoruh al his regeoun;  
 No foreyn enmy durst hym tho werreye,  
 Whil he the Lord meekli dede obeie.
- Non enmy myhte ageyn[e]s hym recure  
 Thoruh non enprises, but sore dede hym dreede; —  
 Made many gret disconfiture  
 Thoruh his force, knythhod & manheede  
 On Philistes, and dauntid eek in deede  
 Too myhti kynges, the ton off Ammonytes,  
 And a-nother, that gouerned Moabites.
- He was founde eek strong and victorious,  
 The Palestynes bryngyng to myschaunce;  
 Geyn Ydumes, so myhti and famous,  
 Thoruh his knyhtli prudent gouernaunce,  
 That he ther pride brouhte onto vttraunce,  
 Outraied hem off wisdam and manheede, —  
 Primo Regum, as ye may pleykli reede.
- He was a sone callid off o yeer,  
 In Israel whan his regne began,  
 Stable off herte and benygne off cheer,  
 Froward nor sturdi to no maner man.  
 Al that while loue off the peeple he wan,

176 who receiued  
him with affec-  
tion and  
anointed him  
King of Israel.

180

184 God gave Saul  
a spirit of  
prophecy,

188

192 and he ruled  
with wisdom  
and prospered

196

and was suc-  
cessful against  
his enemies,

200

204 and defeated  
among others  
the Idumeans,  
as you may  
read in the  
First Book of  
Kings.

208

212 So long as he  
remained kind  
and stable of  
heart, he kept  
the love of his  
people;

179. no] no long H, noo longe R 3. 188. gloire B.  
 195. tho] to H, J, P, H 5. 204. founde] om. H, R 3.

- The tyme, I meene, whil he was iust & stable, 216  
And in his werkis nat founde\* variable.
- but when he grew proud and wilful and no longer obeyed God, But whan that pride gan his herte enhaunce,  
Wilfulness and fals malencolie  
Outraied resoun, to ha[ue] the gouernaunce 220  
Off his olde famous policie,  
And hadde forgetyn in his fantasie  
To knowe the Lord & meekli sue his lawe,  
God from his crowne his grace gan withdrawe. 224
- God withdrew his grace from him. Thonkynde werm off foryetilnesse  
In his herte hadde myned thoruh the wall,  
Whan he to God, for his kynd[e]nesse,  
Gaff no laude nor no thank attall, 228  
Which hadde hym reised onto estat royall  
Fro pore degre, mong al his kyn alone,  
Be synguler fauour to sette hym in his throne.
- What is more froward than the presumption of a boor suddenly raised to power? What thyng in herte mor froward mai be thouht 232  
Than is the sodeyn fals presumpcioun  
Off a wrechche that cam vp off nouht,  
To yeue hym lordshepe and dominacioun?  
And for to make a pleyn comparisoun, 236  
Men sholde off resoun dreede a leoun lasse  
Than the reudnesse off a crownyd asse.
- A lion is less to be feared than a crowned ass. What thyng to God is mor abhomynable  
Than pride upreised out off pouerte? 240  
And nothyng gladli is founde mor vengable  
Than ar wrechchis set in hih degre:  
For from his stok kynde may nat fle;  
Ech thyng resortith, how ferr euer it go, 244  
To the nature which that it cam fro.
- What is more revengeful than a wretch set in high degree? Every creature follows his inherited nature. Frut and apples taken ther tarage [p. 92]  
Wher thei first greuh off the same tre,  
And semlabli ech kynreede & lynage — 248  
Onys a yeer it will non othir be —  
Be tokne or signe, at eye as men may see,  
Draweth comounli in eueri creature  
Sum tech to folwen afftir his nature. 252

217. founde] founden B.

230. mong] among H, R 3. 238. "marke thys," in a later hand, and a line drawn in margin opposite the following four and a half stanzas in J.

239. is more to god H. 242. ar] er H. 245. the] ther H.



I write nat this in rebuk off pouert;  
 But for suche onli as that it disserue:  
 God off his myht, as men be weel expert,  
 May hem in vertu encrenen and conserue,  
 From al myscheeff a poore man preserue,  
 Reise hem on heihte to dominaciouns  
 Thoruh hih noblesse off ther condiciouns.

I cast no slur  
 on poverty: I  
 blame those  
 only who de-  
 serve reproof.

256

Be influence God may his grace sheede  
 Wher he fynt cause onli be meeknesse,  
 A poore man to reise hym vp in deede  
 Onto thestat off vertuous noblesse;  
 For out off vertu cometh al gentillesse,  
 In poore and riche mak non excepcioun,  
 But hem comende lik ther condicioun.

260 God may raise  
 a poor man to  
 nobility, for  
 all gentility  
 comes from  
 virtue,

264

A poore man which that is vertuous  
 And dredith God in his pouerte,  
 Ech thyng eschewyng that is vicious,  
 And to his power doth trouthe & equite, —  
 I dar riht weel, what-euer that he be,  
 Puttyng no rebuk onto his kynreede,  
 But calle hym gentil veraili in deede.

268 and a poor  
 man who is  
 upright and  
 fears God can  
 only be called  
 gentle.

272

But kyng Saul was contrarious,  
 Disobeisaut founde in his werkyng,  
 Whan God made hym to be victorious  
 On Amalech, where Agag was kyng,  
 Hym comaundyng\* to spare no maner thyng,  
 Man nor woman, beeste nor child socoure,  
 But that his suerd sholde al quyk thyng deuoure. 280

276 But Saul was  
 disobedient  
 when God bade  
 him massacre  
 the Amalekites  
 and destroy  
 all their  
 possessions.

But Saul wrouhte al in other wise,  
 Ech thyng reseruyng that was fair to siht;  
 And off entent to make a sacrefise,  
 Afftir his victorie\* he shoop hym anon riht,  
 Fattest beestis he ches, & hath hem diht  
 Toward the fir to maken his offryng,  
 And fro deth he spared Agag the kyng.

He even spared  
 the life of  
 Agag their  
 king.

284

He was repreued afftir of Samuel,  
 To Godis biddyng for he was contraire,  
 As abiect to regne in Israel,

288 Reproved by  
 Samuel, his  
 power of fore-  
 seeing failed,

257. do preserve H. 258. on] of H.

261. fyndith R 3, findeth P. 262. to] om. H.

271. I dar riht weel] I dar say H, R 3, P.

278. comaundyng] comaundid B, J. 284. victoire B, J.

and he was  
tormented by  
an evil spirit.

That al good hope in hym gan disespaire;  
His grace, his myht gan pallen & appaire,  
His prophecie afftir hath hym failed,  
And with a feend he was also trauailed.

292

Thus Fortune  
cast him down,  
and God translated  
his crown  
to David.

Thus from hir wheel Fortune cast hym doun,  
Aualed hym from his roial see;  
And God also took away the crown,  
Bothe from hym and his posterite,  
And set up Dauid for his humilite.  
Loo, how the Lord his doomys can deuyde  
Tenhaunce meeknesse and tabate pryde!

296

300

Saul was  
jealous of David  
because he slew  
Goliath with  
only a staff-  
sling,

Saul endured in his frenesie,  
A wikked sperit so sore hym dede assaile;  
Onto Dauid euer he hadde envie,  
That he was hardi tentren in bataile, —  
With a stafslynge, void off plate & maile,  
Slouh Golias, withoute feer or dreed,  
Pulled out his suerd[e] & smet off his hed.

304

308

and when  
young girls sang  
David's praises,

At ther repairyng hom out off the feeld,  
Whan Dauid hadde slay[e]n this Golie,  
Yonge maidnes whan [that] thei beheeld  
The grete victory, thei in ther armony  
In laude off Dauid thus gan synge & crie:  
"Saul hath slayn a thousand thoruh his myht,  
Dauid ten thousand, the lusty yonge knyht!"

312

Saul felt angry  
and slighted,  
and conspired  
David's death.

Saul disdeyned and seide frowardli,  
"Thei grauntid han a thousand to my name,  
And to the sone heer off Ysai  
Youe ten thousand to encrece\* his fame,  
Which is to me a rebeuk and a shame."  
Wherupon this Saul, fret with ire,  
Off yonge Dauid gan the deth conspire.

316

320

He knew in his  
heart that the  
singing was  
prophetic.

In his herte he hadde a fantasie  
Off ther syngyng whan that he took heed,  
Dempte it was a maner prophecie,  
That Dauid sholde preferrid be in deede  
And to the crowne afftir hym succeede.  
Thouhte his childre, as he gan dyuyne,  
Sholde be depried off the roial lyne.

324

328

294. also] *om.* H.

317. han] have H. 319. to encrece] *tencrece* B, H, J.

319, 20 are transposed in R 3.

Thus day be day Saul weies souhte  
 To sle[en] Dauid, pley[n]li yiff he myhte,  
 Al-be-it so that he no malice thouhte,  
 But euer kept hym lowli in his sihte.  
 Therfore good eure & grace on hym alihte;  
 For ay the Lord off his magnyficence  
 Ageyn tirantis preserueth innocence.

[p. 93] David had no  
 envy of Saul,

332

And as the Bible pley[n]li doth us lere,  
 This Dauid hadde in his tendre age  
 For his noblesse the kyngis douhter deere,  
 Callid Michol, ioyned be mariage.  
 And whan that Saul fill in any rage,  
 Dauid anon, tasswagen his woodnesse,  
 Touchid his harpe & brouht him in gladnesse.

and was  
 married to his  
 daughter  
 Michal;

340

Saul ful ofte gan Dauid to enchace  
 And werreie thoruhout all his londis,  
 Thoruh desertis hym pursue & manace,  
 Off entent tashet hym up in bondis  
 Or taslaie hym, yiff he com in his hondis.  
 But fynali God thoruh his ordynaunce  
 Preserued his knyht from al maner myschaunce.

344 but Saul  
 constantly  
 pursued  
 him,

348

Saul ful ofte was brouht to myscheeff,  
 Yit ay fro deth[e] Dauid dede hym saue;  
 And heeroff this was a special preeff,  
 Whan Dauid kitte his garnement in the caue.  
 And mo toknys yiff ye list to haue,  
 Another tyme Dauid also keppe  
 The liff off Saul, whan he lay & slepte.

352 although  
 David often  
 spared his  
 life,

356

The cas was this: as thei lay hosteieng  
 Nat ferr assonder, and Saul lay and sleepe,  
 Al his peeple aboute[n] hym slepyng,  
 And onpuruieid lik a flok off sheepe;  
 Off which[e] thyng Dauid took good keepe,  
 Doun descendid, and made no delay,  
 Cam to the tente wher kyng Saul lay.

and once  
 entered his  
 unguarded  
 tent

360

The spere off Saul stondyng at his hed,  
 Dauid took it and wente his way anon;  
 Off his comyng ther was no man took heed,

and carried  
 off his spear,  
 while Saul  
 and his men  
 slept.

364

334. alihte] hath liht H. 345. thoruhout] thoruh H, R 3.  
 348. tasslayn H, to haue sleyn R 3. 354. garment H, P.  
 359. and] om. H. 361. lik] lik as H.  
 366. his way] away H.

For Saul slepte and his men echon. 368  
 And whan that he vp to the hill was gon,  
 Toward Saul ageyn he cast his look,  
 Made a noise that all his knyhtes wook.

David then  
 woke them and  
 told Abner  
 that he had

First to Abnor, prynce off his cheualrie, 372  
 Dauid seide these woordis in sentence:  
 "Abnor," quod he, "thou hast doon gret folie,  
 This day shewed a gret negligence,  
 To suffre off Saul the magnyficence 376  
 In pereil stonde, and non heed [to] take,  
 Aboute his persone to make his knyhtis wake.

been reckless of  
 the king's life  
 and deserved  
 death and tor-  
 ture for his  
 carelessness.

Thou art to blame for thi reklesnesse,  
 To leue the kyng stonde in so gret a dreede, 380  
 In slep to haue mor sauour & suetnesse  
 Than off his liff [for] to taken heede.  
 Such negligence requereth for his meede  
 Deth and torment, be rihtful iuggement, 384  
 Aboute a prynce whan folk be negligent.

"See, here is  
 his spear, and  
 now believe  
 how unready  
 you were!

And yiff thou list to seen an euidence,  
 How that his liff stood in iupartie,  
 See heer his spere, & yiff therto credence, 388  
 How onproudyed ye were on your partie, —  
 Saul nor thou, ye may it nat denye,  
 Your liff, your deth, *your* power, *your* puissaunce  
 This day God put hool in my gouernaunce. 392

"But I have  
 never offended  
 against him, as  
 God knows."

But me taquiten off pur innocence,  
 As eueri man sholde onto his kyng,  
 And to declare in me was non offence  
 Ageyn his noblesse in will nor in werkyng, 396  
 As God weel wot, that knoweth euery thyng,  
 That I neuer be no conspiracie  
 Wrouhte nor compassid ageyn his regalie."

Thus David  
 returned good  
 for evil,

Loo, heer exaample off parfit pacience 400  
 Ageyn malice to shewe kynd[e]nesse!  
 Wher Saul shewed his mortal violence,  
 Dauid aquit hym with suffraunce & goodnesse,  
 The tirant venquysshid bi his prudent meeknesse. 404  
 Men ageyn trouthe may weel a werre gynne,  
 But at the eende the palme he doth ay wyne.

382. for] *om.* P, R 3.

391. power *your* puissaunce] *puys*sauce *your* power H.

392. governeer H. 394. onto] to H.

For off this story yiff that ye take heed,  
 Saul is falle for his frowardnesse  
 Into myscheeff and into sodeyn dreed;  
 For Philistees, the Bible berth witnessse,  
 With a gret power gan ther wardis dresse  
 Vpon kyng Saul auenged for to be,  
 Ther tentis pihte beside Gelboe.

and Saul,  
 408 finally attacked  
 by the Philis-  
 tines, at  
 Gelboa,

Wheroff kyng Saul, astonyd in his herte,  
 Hadde lost his sperit off knyhtli hardynesse,  
 And speciali whan he dede aduerte  
 Prophete was non his harmys to redresse,  
 Off futur thynges trouthe to expresse  
 In Israel, which cast hym in gret dreed,  
 Because that tyme Samuel was ded.

[p. 94] became afraid;  
 and as he had  
 416 exiled all the  
 prophets and  
 diviners, and  
 Samuel was  
 dead,

For Saul hadde cast out alle dyuynes  
 From Israel and ech dyuyneresse,  
 Nat-withstandyng [that] the Palestynes  
 Were rise ageyn, his power to oppresse;  
 And he ne knew no maner sorceresse  
 Off whom he myhte any counseil take,  
 And he off God that tyme was forsake.

he went to a  
 woman  
 called in  
 424 Israel a  
 pythoness,

In this wise he stood disconsolat,  
 Counseil off God nor prophete kneuh he non,  
 But lik a man most infortunat,  
 Ongraciousli he spedde hym foorth anon,  
 And secreli this Saul is foorth gon  
 To a woman that sholde hym reede and wisse,  
 In Israel callid a phetonyssse.

428

Which is a name, as clerkis writen all,  
 And office, who that takith heede,  
 Soulis off men ageyn to clepe & call —  
 I meene such[e] that toforn wer dede —  
 Which is a thyng straunge for to reede,  
 That any woman sholde, who list to lere,  
 Make soulis of dede men appeere.

who could call  
 the souls of  
 436 dead men back  
 to earth, which  
 is a very  
 strange thing,

440

407. yiff that ye take] who that takith H.

413. Ther] The H.

423. that] *om.* H, J, P, H 5, R 3.

430. lik] *om.* J.

433. that] which H.

434. Phitonesse H.

438. that] as H.

441. appeere] tappeere H, to apper R 3, to appere P.

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and, as it seems  
to me, not  
according to  
reason, that an  
invisible thing  
should appear  
to bodily eyes.

Vnkouth & straunge is ther opynyoun,  
And to my witt a maner impossible,  
Nat accordyng, me semeth, to resoun,  
Nor lik a thyng which that is credible,  
That a soule, off nature inuisible,  
Mihte appeere or shewe visibly  
Onto eyen which that be bodily.

444

448

But I shall let  
scholars and  
divines

But or that I any ferthere flitte,  
List I were holde to presumptuous,  
To dyuynys this mater I commytte  
And wise clerkis that be vertuous,  
In ther wittis subtil and corious  
To conclude, as it doth hem seeme,  
In this mater a trouthe for to deeme,

452

decide whether  
it was the soul  
of Samuel or  
some other  
spirit who told

Whethir it was the soule off Samuel,  
Or other sperit, that she dede call,  
Which that tolde the kyng off Israel  
Off the bataile that sholde afftir fall,  
His auenturis and his myscheuys all.  
And off his deth he tolde also in deede,  
And how Dauid sholde afftir hym succeede,

456

460

Saul, that for  
his disobedience  
he should die in  
battle with the  
Philistines and  
be succeeded  
by David.

Because onli off his disobeisaunce,  
As it is write, and for his reclesnesse,  
On Amalech for he took nat vengeance.  
Thus the sperit bar to hym witenesse.

464

Whereoff Saul fell in gret heuynesse,  
Knowyng no mene tescap out off this doute,  
But take his fortune as it cometh aboute.

468

Tolde hym also his enmyes were so wroth,  
The Philistees beside Gelboe,  
In that bataile he and his childe both  
Sholde deie that day, off necessite;

472

His cheualrie shal sconfited be,  
Off his regne there is no lengere date,  
For God from hym his kyngdam will translate.

476

After his defeat,  
Saul bade his  
squire run him  
through the  
heart,

And thus Saul retourned is agayn,  
His meyne afftir brouht to disconfiture.  
And whan he sauh al his peple slayn,  
And how ther was no mene to recure  
In that dedli woful auenture,

480

443. Impossible H. 447. or] & H, nor J.

449. or] er H. 455] For in this mater I can nat deeme H.



He bad his squier take his suerd as blyue,  
And thoruh the herte that he sholde hym ryue,

That his enmyes, which were oncircumsised,  
Sholde ha[ue] no power, in story it is founde,  
To falle vpon hym as thei han deuised,  
To yeuen hym his laste fatal wounde,  
His hih noblesse at myscheeff to confounde.  
But his squyer, for feer of God and dreed,  
Wold nat assente to doon so foul a deed;

484 so that he  
should not fall  
into the hands  
of his foes; but  
the squire  
dared

488

To slen his lord he gretli was afferd,  
A thyng hatful in eueri manys siht.  
But Saul took the pomel off his suerd,  
And in the ground ful deepe anon it piht;  
And in al hast possible that he myht,  
Made the poynt, in his furious peyne,  
To perce his herte & parte euene on tweyne.

492 not kill him,  
and Saul had  
to fall on his  
own sword,

496

The Philistees, anon as he was ded,  
Spoiled hym off his roial armure,  
Dismembrid hym and smet off his hed,  
And in tokne off ther disconfiture  
Took the spoiles with al ther besi cure  
And theroff made, in al ther beste entent,  
To Astaroth\* off pride a gret present.

[p. 95] and was des-  
poiled and  
dismembered  
by the  
500 Philistines.

504

Thus was Saul slay[e]n in sentence  
Off Philistees vpon Gelboe,  
Forsake off God for inobedience,  
Abiect also down from his roial see:  
And thus for lakkyng off humylite,  
Off God he was for euere set a-side.  
Loo, heer the eende off surquedie & pride!

508 Thus Saul, for-  
saken by God  
for disobedi-  
ence, was cast  
down from his  
throne and  
slain.

### ¶ Lenvoye.

**H**ATH mynde on Saul,\* which to estat roiall  
Fro louh degre was callid for meeknesse;  
But *presumpcioun* made hym haue a fall,  
Off God abiect for his frowardnesse,  
Loste his crowne, the Bible berth witenesse.  
And cause was, for his disobeisaunce;  
To Godis biddying he gaff non attendaunce.

512 Remember the  
fate of Saul,  
who rose from  
low degree and  
lost his crown  
for disobedi-  
ence.

516

483. that] *om.* H. 495 al] the H.  
499. off] & of H. 504. Astraoth B, J. 514. to have H.

God asks of us  
only an honest  
heart, but he  
punishes all  
who disobey  
him.

Noble Princes,  
if you would  
keep your  
crowns, be just  
and obey God.

Virtue of Vir-  
tues is true  
obedience.  
Without it all  
worldly policy  
were destroyed.

Where  
discretion  
rules without  
wilfulness, the  
people should  
obey their  
princes.

Obedience  
brings welfare,  
joy and prosper-  
ity to all  
lands;

God nat axeth no mor off man att all  
But hool[e] herte withoute doubilnesse, 520  
For alle the giffes, which in especiall  
He gaff to man off his hih goodnesse;  
But he chastisith al onkynd[e]nesse,  
Such as be rebel for to do plesaunce, 524  
And to his biddying ne yeue non attendaunce.  
Noble Pryncis, vertu most pryncepall  
You to conserue in your hih noblesse,  
Is to enprente in your memoriall 528  
Feith, equite, alle wrongis to redresse,  
To susteene trouthe and rihtwisnesse,  
And tofor God holdeth euenli the balaunce,  
And to his biddying yeueth hool your attendaunce. 532

¶ The comendacion of Bochas oppon the vertu of  
obedience.<sup>1</sup>

VERTU off vertues, most off excellence,  
Which that hath most souereyn suffisaunce,  
Is the vertu off trewe obedience,  
Which set all thyng in rihtful gouernaunce: 536  
For ne wer nat this prudent ordenaunce,  
Summe tobeie and summe aboue to guie,  
Destroied were al worldli policie.  
Where that vertu and hih discrecioun 540  
Auoided han from hem al wilfulness,  
Be title onli off domynacioun,  
Trewli lyuyng vpon rihtwisnesse,  
Wrong and errours iustli to redresse, 544  
Off trouthe I may riht weel afferme & seie,  
The peepke meekli ther biddying sholde obeie.  
This noble vertu off feithful obeisaunce,  
Establisshid vpon humylite, 548  
Which includith no double variaunce,  
In all regeouns and in ech contre  
Causeth weelfare, ioie and prosperite;  
And as vertu, cheeff and souereyne, 552  
Al vicious riot it pleyntli doth restreyne.

519. of man no more H. This stanza is transposed with the  
next in R 3. 526. vertu] of vertu H.

528. Is to] it is (Emprent) H. 531. holdeth] hold P.  
541. have H. 546. sholde] did H. 553. riot] root H.

<sup>1</sup> "A commendacioun," etc., MS. J. leaf 40 a, otherwise agreeing  
with B.

Obedience eek, as men may see,  
 Falsnesse exilith and al rebelloun;  
 For bi atempraunce,\* riht and equite  
 Stant the weelfare off eueri regeoun:  
 For the meeknesse and low subieccioun  
 Off comountes halt up the regalies  
 Off lordshepes & off all monarchies.

556 it excludes de-  
 ceit and re-  
 bellion;

And, no doubte, whan lordshepes off entent  
 Besi been the souereyn Lord to queeme,  
 To ther subiectis do rihtful iugement,  
 In conscience as riht and resoun deeme,  
 Than shal ther crowne and [ther] diadeeme  
 Vpon ther hed perseuere & fresshli shyne,  
 And make subiectis to her biddynge encline.

560 and when  
 princes are  
 zealous to  
 please God  
 and do right,  
 they shall  
 keep their  
 crowns,

Thus obeisaunce pleyntli at a woord,  
 In such as han lordshepe and souereynthe,  
 Doon off entent to ther souereyn Lord,  
 Shal cause hem regne in long prosperite,  
 And ther subiectis off humylite,  
 For ther noble famous gouernaunce,  
 Ay to be redy vnder ther obeisaunce.

568 and their  
 subjects will  
 obey them.

For who that serueth the Lord off Lordis all, [p. 96]  
 And hath the peeple in his subieccioun,  
 God will keepe hym that he shal nat fall,  
 Longe preserue his domynacioun;  
 But ageynward, whan wisdom and resoun  
 Been ouermaistried with sensualite,  
 Farweel the floures off ther felicity!

572 The ruler who  
 serves God  
 shall not fall.

Obedience bluntith the sharpnesse  
 Off cruel suerdis in tirantis hondis,  
 And meeknesse appesith the felnesse  
 Off hasti vengeance, brekith atoo the bondis;  
 Eek pacience set quyete in londis:  
 And where these thre confute in comountes,  
 Long pes perseuereth in kyngdames & cites.

580 Obedience,  
 humility, and  
 patience in  
 princes bring  
 peace to their  
 realms

Obedience doth also restreyne  
 Conspiracies and fals collusiouns;  
 Whan she stant onpartid, nat on tweyne,

588 and restrain  
 conspiracies.

556. batempraunce B.

565. 2nd ther] *om.* J, H 5, P. 567. encline] declyne H.

568. Thus] This H. 569. han] have H.

576. peeplis H. 586. settith R 3, setteth P.

588. in] *om.* H, R 3, P.

- There is no dreed off no discenciouns: 592  
 For she combyneth the trewe opynyouns  
 In peeplis hertis, ful weel afor prouyded,  
 Vnder pryncis to stonde hool ondeuyded.
- Subjects are  
 not rebellious  
 to princes who  
 honour God. Wher pryncis be meek, humble & debonaire 596  
 Towardis God off hool affeccoun,  
 Ther subiectis be gladli nat contraire  
 In ther seruise be no rebelloun;  
 For ther is founde no deuysiou, 600  
 But hed & membris, ech for his partie,  
 Be so gouerned be prudent policie.
- But Saul was  
 put down for  
 his obstinacy. Contrariouli Saul was put down,  
 Abiect off God for his obstynacie, 604  
 Put from his sceptre, his crowne, his regeoun,  
 Off Israel loste al the monarchie,  
 For he list nat make off his alie,  
 Off frowardnesse and wilful negligence, 608  
 This noble vertu callid obedience.
- As it is incumb-  
 ent on kings  
 to rule benevo-  
 lently, so do  
 obedience and  
 reverence ap-  
 pertain to their  
 subjects, and For as it longith in kyngdamys & citees,  
 Vnder a keye off on benyuolence,  
 Pryncis, kynges to gouerne [in] ther sees, 612  
 So apperteneth deu[e] reuerence  
 To ther subiectis bi obedience,  
 Tobeie ther lordis, as thei been off degre,  
 Be title off riht in eueri comeunte. 616
- there is neither  
 obedience nor  
 unity when  
 subjects pre-  
 sume against  
 their princes. For obeisaunce, iff it be discernyd  
 With Argus eyen, who that taketh heed,  
 As riht requereth is nat weel gouernyd,  
 Whan the membris presume ageyn the hed, 620  
 Off gouernaunce ther is no parfit speed;  
 From vnyte thei gon a froward weie,  
 Whan subiectis ther pryncis disobeie.

[How kyng Roboam for gevyng feith to yonge  
 counsaile lost the beneuolence of his peple and  
 deied a fool.]<sup>1</sup>

The young  
 King Reho-  
 boam, son of  
 Solomon,

ONTO Iohn Bochas in ordre next ther cam, 624  
 With ful gret dool and lamentacioun,  
 The yonge kyng callid Roboam,

605. 3rd his] & his H. 610. in.] to H.

617. obeisaunce] obedience H — discernyd] described H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 40 recto.

Sone and next heir to Salamoun,  
 Entryng be tittle off iust successioun,  
 Bësouhte myn auctour to make off his folie  
 And off his fallyng a pitous tragedie.

628 besought my  
 author to tell  
 the tragedy  
 of his fall.

First whan he entred into his regeoun,  
 Twelue tribus gouernyng in deede,  
 Rewlid hymself be will and no resoun,  
 Kepte his subiectis pleynli, as I reede,  
 Nat vnder loue but vnder froward dreede;  
 Off olde wise, to his gret disauail,  
 He despised the doctryn and counsail.

632 Even when he  
 first came to  
 the throne he  
 despised the  
 counsel of  
 wise men

He demened, as it is weel kouth,  
 His sceptre, his crowne and his regalie  
 Be such folk as floured in her youth,  
 Coude off custum ther wittis weel applie  
 To bleende hym falsli with ther flat[e]rie,  
 Which is a stepmooder callid in substaunce  
 To al vertu and al\* good gouernaunce.

640 and followed  
 the advice of  
 youthful flat-  
 terers,

Alas, it is gret dool and gret pite,  
 That flat[e]rie sholde haue so gret fauour,  
 Which bleendith princis that they may nat see,  
 Mistith the eyen off eueri gouernour,  
 That thei can nat knowe her owne errour,  
 Fals hony shad ay on ther sentence.  
 A fool is he that yeueth to hem credence.

644 to whom only  
 fools give  
 credence;

Thei may be callid the deuelis taboureris,  
 With froward sownys eris to fulfille;  
 Or off Circes the pereilous boteleris,  
 Which galle and hony [togedir] down distille,  
 Whos drynkes been bothe ameraus & ille,  
 And, as clerkis weel deuise cunne,  
 Wers than the drynkes off Cirenes tunne.

652 for such may  
 be called the  
 devil's tam-  
 bourneurs,  
 who din evil  
 into men's  
 ears:

Eris off pryncis ful weel thei can enoynte [p. 97]  
 With the soffte oile off adulacioun,  
 And ther termys most subtili appoynte,  
 Ech thyng concludyng with fals decepcioun,  
 Ay blandisshyng with ameraus poisoun;

660 subtle of  
 speech, and  
 always ending  
 with  
 deception,

640. her] *om.* H. 644. 2nd al] to al B, H, R 3, H 5.

652. tabourners H, taberoures R 3, tabourers P.

654. butlers P. 655. togedir] *om.* J.

659. Anoynte H.

- And fynali, as the poete seith,  
Ther feith off custum concludith with onfeith. 664
- they flower in  
words without  
fruit and are  
empty of  
truth,  
Flourying in woordis, thouh ther be no frut,  
Double off herte, plesaunt off language,  
Off trewe menyng void and destitut, 668  
In mustryng outward pretende a fair visage:  
Who trusteth hem fyndeth \* smal auantage,  
Be apparence & glorious fressh shewyng  
Pryncis deceuyng & many a worthi kyng. 672
- as Rehoboam  
can well bear  
witness.  
Roboam \* can bere ful weel witesse,  
From hym auoidyng folkis that were trewe,  
How he was hyndred be flatrie & falsnesse  
Be hem that coude forge out talis newe; 676  
Whos counseil afftir sore dede hym rewe,  
And with ther feyned fals suggestioun  
Gretli abreggid his dominacioun.
- Of fooly youth  
and presump-  
tion he believed  
himself wiser  
than his father,  
He dempte hymself off more auctorite, 680  
Off foli youthe and off presumpcioun,  
Than was his fader in al his \* rialte.  
And this pompous fals opynyoun  
Cam into his conceit bi adulacioun; 684  
For flatereris bar to hym witesse,  
How he excellid his fadres hih noblesse.
- and oppressed  
his subjects.  
And when they  
begged for  
relief from  
their tributes,  
He dede gret rigour and oppressioun  
Vpon his peeple, as it was weel preued; 688  
And thei to fynde sum mytigacioun  
In materis which that han hem greued,  
Off ther tributis for to be releued,  
Besouhte he wolde recele hem in ther neede: 692  
But al for nouht; he took theroff non heede.
- he set aside  
all good coun-  
sel and paid  
no attention to  
them.  
Al old counsail from hym he sette a-side  
And refusid ther doctryn and ther lore;  
And be fals counsail off folkis ful off pride, 696  
His poore liges he oppressid sore.  
And ten kynredis anon, withoute more,  
For tyrannye and for mysgouernaunce  
From hym withdrouh ther trouthe & legeaunce. 700

670. fyndeth] fynt B, J, H.

673. Roboam] Roboan B, J (Roboam H, R 3, H 5, P).

682. al his] his gret B, gret J. 684. into] to H.

686. fadres hih noblesse] fadir in fairnesse H. 690. have H.

694. he] to H, R 3.



Thus off the kyng conceyued the rigour,  
 The peeples anon off indignacioun  
 Stooned Adoram, which was collectour  
 Off the tributis in al his regeoun;  
 From hym departyng bi rebelloun.  
 Wheroff astonyd, tauenge his gret onriht,  
 Into Iherusalem took anon his fliht.

So ten tribes  
 arose, stoned a  
 tax collector  
 named Adoram  
 and renounced  
 their  
 allegiance.

704

And whan thei were partid from Roboam,  
 The ten kynredis be dyuysiou  
 Ches hem a kyng callid Ieroboam.  
 And Roboam, withynne his roial toun,  
 To been auengid on ther rebelloun  
 And for to doon on hem cruel iustise,  
 An hundred thousand he made anon tarise.

708 Rehoboam fled  
 to Jerusalem.  
 The ten tribes  
 chose  
 Jeroboam  
 king.

712

With Ieroboam he caste hym for to meete,  
 And al attonys sette in iupartie;  
 But Semeias\* the prophete bad hym lete,  
 And from the werre withdrawn his partie.  
 And mor the quarel for to iustefie,  
 Off his peeplis froward departyng,  
 It was Godis will doon for a pun[y]shyng.

716 Rehoboam  
 raised an army  
 of 100,000,  
 but Shemaiah  
 advised him  
 to withdraw.

720

Touchyng the surplus off his gouernaunce,  
 His roial beeldyng off many fair cite,  
 His grete riche famous suffisaunce,  
 Off wyn and oile hauyng gret plente,  
 And how his empire encrecid yeres thre,  
 Eek how that tyme he rihtful was in deede,  
 In Iosephus his story ye may reede.

724 For the rest,  
 his story is  
 told in  
 Iosephus.

728

Off his childre born in the riht[e] lyne,  
 Eihtene wyues, as maad is menciou  
 I fynde he hadde, and many concubyne,  
 Sonys and douhtris be procreacioun;  
 And how his richesse and gret pocioun  
 That tyme encreced, as it is weel knowe,  
 To God a-boue whil that he bar hym lowe.

732 He had  
 eighteen  
 wives and  
 many concu-  
 bines and a  
 profusion  
 of children,

But, as this auctour maketh rehersaile,  
 In his encreces and augmentacioun,  
 Meeknesse off herte in hym gan waste & faile,

736 but lost his  
 meekness of  
 heart and be-  
 came vicious;

706. gret] herte H. 707. took anon] he tooke H.

708. departid H. 714. to rise H.

717. Semeias] Rameus B, H, J, R 3 H 5.

737. Aumentacioun H. 738. waste &] om. H.

- And pride entrid with fals presumpcioun,  
 Vertu dispisyng and al relegeoun; 740  
 Affter whos vices, as seith the same book,  
 Wikkid exaample off hym the peeples took.
- and the people, as always happens, followed his bad example. Affter the maneres, wher thei be good or ille, [p. 98]  
 Vsid off pryncis in dyuers regeouns, 744  
 The peeples is redy to vsen and fulfille  
 Fulli the traces off ther condiciouns:  
 For lordis may in ther subiecciouns,  
 So as hem list, who-so can taken heede, 748  
 To vice or vertu ther subiectis leede.
- So he was chastised by God, Thus Roboam for his transgressiouns,  
 In Iosephus as it is deuised,  
 And for his froward fals opynyouns, 752  
 Onli for he al vertu hath despised,  
 Off God he was rihtfully chastised:  
 In Ierusalem his cheeff roial toun  
 Off his enmyes besegid enviroun. 756
- besieged in his capital by the king of Egypt, The kyng off Egypt a sege aboute hym laide  
 With so gret peeples, that socour was ther non,  
 Al-be-it so that Roboam abraide  
 And preied God delyuere hym from his fon, 760  
 Tauoide off merci his enmies euerichon.  
 But God list nat to granten his praiere,  
 But hym chastised, lik as ye shal heere.
- and finally losing it to him together with all the treasure of the temple. First his cite and his noble toun 764  
 Delyuered was, he knew no bet socour,  
 Vnder a feyned fals composicioun;  
 For at ther entryng, void off al fauour,  
 Kepyng no couenant, took al the tresour, 768  
 Withynne the temple hauyng no pite,  
 But ladde it hom to Egypt ther contre.
- Rehoboam was proud and a fool, and I'll let him live and die in his folly. And to reherse, it is a gret[e] dool,  
 How Roboam, as Iosephus doth declare, 772  
 Was inli proud and therwithal a fool,  
 And off al wisdam destitut and bare,  
 Onmerciablis his peeples for to spare,  
 Hatyng good counsail, and so in his folie 776  
 Regnyng a fool; and so I lete hym deie.

750. R begins again here. 758. With] And R.

761. Tauoide] Avoide R.

766. fals] om. R. 770. it] hym R — ther] that R.

771. a grete] to gret a H, R 3, so gret a H 5.

## [Lenvoye.]

**P**HILISOPHRES concluden and deuise

In ther bookis off old\* experience,  
That counseilour[e]s sad, expert & wise,  
Trewe off ther woord, stable off ther sentence,  
Hasti nor rakel for no violence,  
Keepe & preserue, the trouthe I dar attame,  
Noblesse off pryncis fro myscheeff & diffame.

Wise counsellors  
preserve princes  
from mischief,

780

Hasty\* youthe and rancour in contrari wise,  
Which han to will[e] al ther aduertence,  
Except hemsilff all othir men despise  
Thoruh ther onbridled furious insolence,  
Nothyng aqueyntid with wisdam nor prudence,  
Brynge ageynward, wheroff thei be to blame,  
Noblesse of princis\* in myscheeff & diffame.

but hasty  
youth and ran-  
cour bring them  
to destruction.

788

Kyng Roboam, ageyn riht and iustise,  
To yonge foolis gaff feith & most credence,  
Crueli his subiectis to chastise;  
Which put his peeple from his benyuolence,  
Drouh\* ten kynredis from his obedience,  
Which was to hym, be record, ful gret shame,  
Puttyng his noblesse in myscheeff & diffame.

792 King Reho-  
boam, advised  
by young fools,  
treated his  
subjects badly  
and drove  
them to re-  
bellion.

796

Noble Pryncis, doth wisli aduertise,  
In preseruyng\* off your\* magnificence,  
Off olde expert nat blent with couetise  
Taketh your counseil and doth hem reuerence,  
Eyed as Argus in ther hih prouidence,  
Which conserue be report off good name  
Noblesse off pryncis from myscheeff & diffame.

Noble Princes,  
take your  
counsel of  
old and expert  
advisers, who  
are not blinded  
by covetous-  
ness.

804

[A Chapitle/ descryuyng how prynces beyng hedis of  
ther comountees sholde haue noble cheualrie true  
Iuges &c<sup>a</sup> ther commounte to gouerne &c<sup>a</sup>.]<sup>1</sup>

**W**HAT ertheli thyng is mor deceyuable,  
Than off pryncis the pompe & veynglorie,\*

What is more  
deceptive than  
the pomp and  
vain glory of  
princes?

779. old] good B. 782. nor] ne R. 785. Hasty] Haste B, J, R 3.  
786. have H. 787. all] & H. 789. nor] & H. 790 Brynge] benyngne H.  
791. Noblesse of princis] Puttyng his noblesse B, P, J, H 5,  
Puttyng ther noblesse H, Puttyng her noblesse R 3.  
796. Drouh] Thoruh B, through P, Thruugh R 3, H 5.  
800. preseruyng] perseueryng B. 801. expert] expertis R.  
802. Take P. 803. as] of H — hih] om. H, R 3.  
807, 9, 10. veyngloire, victoire, memoire B.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 41 recto.

- Suddenly they disappear, their fame clouded with a dark shadow of oblivion. Which weene [to] stonde in ther estatiss stable, 808  
 As thei the world hadde conquered be victorie —  
 And sodenli be put out off memorie,  
 Ther fame cloudid, allas, and ther noblesse  
 With a dirk shadwe off foryetilnesse! 812
- Where would be the glory of emperours were it not for scholars who write ther histories? Wheroff kom[e]th the famous cleer shynynge  
 Off emperoures in ther consistories? —  
 Or wheroff komth ther laude in reportyng,  
 Sauff that clerkis han wreten ther histories? 816  
 Or where were now conquestis transitories,  
 Or ther tryumphes — wher sholde men hem fynde,  
 Ne had\* writeris ther prowesse put in mynde?
- Even the fame of the Nine Worthies rested on the labour of the people. Rekne up all, and first the worthy nyne, 820  
 In hih noblesse which hadde neuer peeris:  
 Ther marcial actis, which cleerli dede shyne,  
 Ther fame vpborn aboue the\* nyne speeris  
 With loude sownys off Famys clariouneris, 824  
 Ther glorious palmes, yiff thei be weel peised,\*  
 Be low labour off comouns was first reised.
- As a statue cannot stand without feet and legs, no prince may prosper without subjects. Mak a liknesse off thes gret ymages [p. 99]  
 Coriousli corue out be entaile, — 828  
 Hed, armys, bodi, and ther fressh visages,  
 Withoute feet or leggis may nat vaile  
 To stonde vpriht; for needis thei mut faile.  
 And semblabli subiectis in comountees 832  
 Reise up the noblesse off pryncis in ther sees.
- The head is set highest, as we know, As hed and membres in ymages been o ston,  
 Outher o stok, be cumpas ondeuyded,  
 And be proporcioun ther feturis euerichon 836  
 Set in trewe ordre, as Nature hath provided,  
 So that all errours thoruh craftt be circumcided:  
 The hed set hiest be custom, as men knowe,  
 The bodi amynd, the feet benethe lowe. 840

808. to] *om.* J, H 5, bei R 3 — ay in per statis R.

812. forgetfulness R.

819. Ne had] Nadde B.

823. the] all the B, J.

825. peised] preised B.

826. vpreised H.

827. thes] the H. 830. avale R.

834. o] of R, H.

835. o] of R, H, R 3, P.

838. thoruh] bi R, H, by R 3 — circumcided] circumcised R, circumscised R 3.

840. amynd] in myddis R.

Mihti pryncis for ther hih renoun,  
 As most worthi shal ocupie the hed,  
 With wit, memorie\* and eyen off resoun  
 To keepe ther membris fro myscheeff & dreed, 844  
 Lik ther degrees take off hem good heed,  
 With cleer[e] forsiht off a prudent thouht  
 Ther feet preserue that thei erre nouht.

and by its  
 foresight must  
 keep the other  
 members from  
 harm.

Ther mut been handis & armys off diffence, 848  
 Which shal this ymage manli keepe & guie  
 From alle assautis off foreyn violence,  
 Which shal be named noblesse off cheualrie —  
 Ther trewe office iustli to magnefie, 852  
 Sustene the chirch & make hemsiluen strong  
 To see that widwes nor maidnes ha[ue] no wrong.

848 There must also  
 be hands and  
 arms of defence,

Prudent iuges, as it is skele and riht,  
 To punshe wrong and surfetis to redresse, 856  
 In this ymage shal ocupie the siht:  
 For loue or hate, bi doom off rihtwisesse,  
 For freend or fo his iugementis dresse,  
 So egali the lawes to susteene, 860  
 In ther werkis that noon errour be seene.

prudent judges,  
 who are as  
 eyes,

Mid this ymage there is a bodi set,  
 An agregat off peeplis and degrees,  
 Be parfit pes and vnyte I-knet  
 Bi thestatis that gouerne comountees, —  
 As meires, prouostes & burgeis in citees,  
 Marchauntis also, which seeke sundri londis,  
 With othir crafftis which lyuen bi ther hondis. 868

a torso made  
 of officials,  
 burgesses and  
 merchants;

And as a bodi which that stant in helthe  
 Feelith no greeff off no froward humours,  
 So eueri comoun contynueth in gret welthe,  
 Which is demened with prudent gouernours,  
 That can appese debatis and errours,  
 The people keepe from al contrauersie,  
 Causyng the[r] weelfare tencrece & multeplie.

and as a body  
 in health  
 knows no dis-  
 comfort, so is a  
 country rich  
 when governed  
 by prudent  
 men who keep  
 the people in  
 peace.

842. hed] stede H.

843. memoire B. 844. ther] the R.

848. armys & hondis R, H.

853. hemsiluen] hem ful R.

854. nor] & R. 862. In myddis R.

864. I-knet] knett R.

866. Mayores P, mayrys H 5, Mairis H — prouestes R.

872. demened] demyd R. 874. to kepe R — countrouersye R.

This body must  
also have a  
soul of con-  
templative folk,

This bodi must haue a soule off liff 876  
To quyke the membris with gostli mociouns,  
Which shal be maad off folk contemplatiff,  
The cherche committed to ther pocessiouns,  
Which bi ther hooli conuersaciouns 880  
And good example[s] sholde as sterris shyne,  
Be grace and vertu the peeple [t]enlumyne.

to whose care  
the church is  
committed, and  
who should tell  
the truth to  
all men and  
reprove vices;

Vpon the liht off ther condiciouns,  
Off this bodi dependith the weelfare; 884  
For in ther techyng and predicaciouns  
Thei sholde trouthe to hih & low declare,  
And in ther office for no dreed ne spare  
Vices correcte, lich as thei ar holde, 888  
Sithe thei been heerdis off Cristes folde.

and there must  
be labourers to  
hold up and  
sustain the  
body as feet  
and legs; for  
honest labour  
is wholly  
justified.

Folwyng vpon, off entent ful cleene,  
Laboreris, as ye han herd deuised,  
Shal this bodi bern up and susteene 892  
As feet and leggis, which may nat be despised;  
For trewe labour is iustli auctorised,  
And ner the plouh vpholden be trauaile,  
Off kynges, pryncis farweel al gouernaile. 896

Thus, if  
princes, knights,  
judges, bur-  
gesses, clerics  
and labourers  
do their duty,  
then it may  
be said that  
this image is  
well wrought.

Thus first yiff pryncis gouerned been be riht,  
And knythod suffre the peeple to ha[ue] no wrong,  
And trouthe in iuges shewe out his cleer liht,  
And feith in cites with loue be drawe a-long, 900  
And hooli cherche in vertu be maad strong,  
And in his labour the plouh ne feyne nouht, —  
Thanne be proporcioun this ymage is weel wrouht.

With King  
Rehoboam as  
an example,  
princes must  
remember that  
God created  
people for the  
advantage of  
rulers, not to be  
oppressed.

This mateer hool for texemplefie, 904  
Kyng Roboam for fals\* oppressioun  
And for his wilful froward tirannye  
Loste a gret parti off his regeoun;  
Wherefore, let pryncis considren off resoun, 908  
God sette the peeple for lordis auauntage,  
And nat to been oppressid with seruage.

877. quykene R.

879. commyttith H.

881. sholde] holde R. 888. ar] er H.

889. owne folde R.

896. princis kyngis R, R 3 — al] the H.

898. to] om. R.

905. fals] a fals B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P — oppressioun] pre-  
sumpcioun H.



Vpon summe pryncis Bochas doth compleyne, [p. 100]  
 Such as haue a custum and maneer  
 Ageyn ther subiectis ongoodli to disdeyne,  
 And off pride to shewe hem froward cheer;  
 Counseileth hem to remembre & ler,  
 As this chapitle doth fynali deuise,  
 First out off labour al lordshepe dede arise.

Bochas disap-  
 proves of  
 912 princes who are  
 disdainful to  
 their subjects,  
 and counsels  
 them to remem-  
 ber that all  
 lordship first  
 916 arose out of  
 labour.

[How Mucius Scevola slouh an Innocent in stede of  
 Kyng Porcenna that leide siege to Rome.]<sup>1</sup>

WHAN kyng Porcenna with his cheualrie  
 Ageyn Romeyns a werre first began,  
 The toun besegyng vpon ech partie  
 With gret puissaunce brouht out off Tuskan,  
 In the cite ther was a knyhtli man,  
 Mucius Scevola, which caste in ther distresse  
 To breke the siege thoruh his hih prowesse.  
 Leet arme hymself[e] cleene in plate & maile,  
 For comoun profit, tauauncen his corage  
 Kyng Porcenna proudli to assaile;  
 A tyme prouyded to his auountage,  
 Thoruh the siege to maken his passage,  
 And fynali at his in-comyng  
 Iuparte his persone for to sle the kyng.

When the  
 Etruscans once  
 besieged Rome,  
 920 Mucius Sce-  
 vola determined  
 to pass through  
 the hostile

But lik as tellith Titus Lyuyus,  
 Wher Porcenna sat in his roial see,  
 This senatour, this manli Mucius,  
 Sauh a prynce off gret auctorite,  
 The kyng rasemblyng, clad [both] in o lyuere,  
 Atween discernyng no maner variaunce;  
 Slouh that prynce off veray ignoraunce.

924 lines and slay  
 King Porcenna.

But whan he knew[e] that he dede faile  
 To slen Porcenna, enmy to the toun,  
 And sauh he hadde lost al his trauaile,  
 He made a pitous lamentacioun,  
 Because he dede execucioun  
 Off ignoraunce, ageyn his owne entent,  
 To spare a tirant and slen an innocent.

928

932 Unfortunately  
 he mistook  
 another prince  
 for the king,  
 and killed him,

But when he  
 saw his blunder,  
 940 he cried out in  
 grief at having  
 slain an inno-  
 cent man

916. As] And H, R.

920. toun] ton H.

933. his] om. R.

931. Iuparte] Iupardie R.

935. Sauh] Sith R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 41 verso.

941. sauh] sith R.

and going up  
to a fire, he  
held his hand  
in the flames  
until it was  
consumed.

For which he was with hymself ful wroth,  
That he was founde so necligent in deede,  
And with his hand onto a fir he goth, 948  
Made it brenne briht as any gleede,  
Bothe nerff & bon and his flessch to sheede,  
His hand consumyng on pecis heer & yonder,  
And from his arm made it parte assonder. 952

For this deed  
the Romans  
ever afterward  
called him  
Scævola,

And as the story declareth onto vs,  
This manli man, this noble senatour,  
Afor tyme was callid Mucius, 956  
Which for the comoun dede many gret labour;  
And for the ynkouth hasti fell rigour  
Doon [vn]to hymself, the Romeyns all,  
Sceuola thei dede hym afftir call.

which is to  
say, a man  
without a hand.

As moche to seyne be language off that lond — 960  
Who take ariht the exposicioun —  
As a man which is withoute an hond.  
And afftir hym bi successioun  
Al his offspryg, that wer bor in the toun, 964  
In remembraunce for tencrece his fame,  
Off Sceuola bar afftir hym the name.

Such examples  
shew what  
perils and suf-  
fering men  
have endured  
for common ad-  
vantage, as  
once when  
Brutus chased  
Tarquin and all  
kings from  
Rome.

Be this exauple and many a-nother mo,  
Yiff men list her corages to awake, 968  
Thei sholde seen what peril & what wo  
For comoun profit men hauē\* vndirtake,  
As whilom Brutus for Lucrecis sake  
Chaced Tarquyn for his transgressioun 972  
And kynges alle out off Rome toun.

Lucrece's story  
is related by  
Chaucer, who

Touchyng Lucrece, exauple off wifli trouthe,  
How yonge Tarquyn hir falsli dede oppresse,  
And afftir that, which was to gret a routhe, 976  
How she hirsilff[e] slouh for heuynesse,  
It nedith nat rehersyn the processe,  
Sithe that Chaucer, cheeff poete off Bretayne,  
Wrot off hir liff a legende souerayne. 980

told why the  
Romans exiled  
their kings and  
how Æneas de-  
serted Dido,

Rehersyng ther among[es] other thynges  
Ech circumstaunce and ech occasioun:  
Whi Romeyns exilid first ther kynges,

948. And] An R. 950. and] om. R. 957. hasti] om. R.  
958. vnto] to H, J, R 3, H 5, P. 959. afftir did hym R.  
960. As meche to seye R. 968. Corage H.  
970. haue] han B. 979. Sithe] Which R.

Neuer to regnen afftir in ther toun,  
As olde cronycles make mencion,  
Remembryng also thunkyndli gret outrage  
Bi Eneas\* doon to Dido off Cartage.

984

Eek othir stories which he wrot his lyue  
Ful notabli with eueri circumstaunce,  
And ther fatis dede pitousli descryue,  
Lik as thei fill put hem in remembraunce,  
Wherfore yiff I sholde my penne auauce,  
Afftir his makynge to putte hem in memorie,\*  
Men wolde deeme it presumpcioun & veynglorie.

988 as well as other  
tales, notably  
written. It  
were presump-  
tion for me to  
tell them again,

992

For as a sterre in presence off the sunne  
Lesith his fresshnesse and his cleer[e] liht,  
So my reudnesse vnder skies dunne  
Dareth ful lowe and hath lost his siht,  
To be compared ageyn the bemys briht  
Off this poete; wherfore it were but veyn  
Thyng seid be hym to write it newe ageyn.

[p. 101] for as a star  
pales before  
996 the sun, so  
my unpolished  
language can  
stand no com-  
parison to the  
bright beams of  
this poet.

1000

[How Lucrece/ oppressid bi Tarquin slouh hirsilf.] <sup>1</sup>

**B**UT at Lucrece stynte I will a while,  
It were pite hir story for to hide,  
Or slouthe the penne of my reud[e] stile,  
But for hir sake alle materis set a-side.  
Also my lord bad I sholde abide,  
By good auyis at leiser to translate  
The doolful processe off hir pitous fate.

Yet, after all, I  
will pause at  
Lucrece. It  
would be a  
1004 pity not to tell  
her story, and,  
besides, my  
lord bade me  
do it.

1008

Folwyng the traxis off Collucyus,  
Which wrot off hir a declamacioun  
Most lamentable, most doolful, most pitous,  
Wher he descryueth the dolerous tresoun  
Off hir constreyned fals oppressioun,  
Wrouht & compassid bi vnwar violence,  
The liht ontroublid off hir cleer conscience.

So, following  
Collucius, I'll  
describe how  
she was taken  
unawares and  
outraged.  
1012

986. Remembre R. 987. Eneas] ences B, encrece J,  
Encrece H, Encres H 5, encros R 3, Eneas R, Aeneas P.  
988. his] in his H. 991. fill] ful R. 992. Wheroff R.  
993, 94. memoire, veyngloire B.  
999. compared] compacid R. 1001. be hym] befor R.  
1003. for] om. H.  
1007. at] bi H. 1008. hir] his R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 42 recto.

- Her father was Spurius, her husband Collatine; Sextus Tarquin was the cause of her death.      Hir fader whilom callid Spurius,  
1016      Hir worthi husbonde named Collatyn,  
Which bi the luxure & tresoun odious  
And vicious outrage of Sextus, proud Tarquin,  
Oppressid was & brouht onto hir fyn.      1020  
Whos dedli sorwe in Inglissh for to make,  
Off pitous routhe my penne I feelee quake.
- Tarquin came upon her like a thief in the night with a naked sword in his hand,      This said Tarquyn, this euel auised knyht,  
This sclaunderid man, most hatful for his deede,      1024  
Cam lich a theeff, alas, vpon a nyht  
With naked suerd, whan no man took non heede,  
Vpon Lucrece, she quakyng in hir dreede,  
Liggyng abedde ferr from hir folkes all,      1028  
And knew no refuge for helpe for to call.
- and said that if she would not yield to him, he would find means to destroy her good name forever.      He manacyng in his froward entent,  
On hir beholdyng with a furious cheer,  
That with his suerd[e], but she wolde assent,      1032  
Hire and a boy he wolde prente ifeer,  
Such on as was most ougli off maner,  
Most onlikli off persone and off fame:  
Thus he hir thratte for to sclauandre hir name.      1036
- So there was no help for it. Next morning she told her husband all, and, requesting him to do vengeance, said      But his entent[e] whan she dede feelee,  
And sauh no mene ageyn hir woful chaunce,  
The morwen afftir she list nothyng concele,  
Tolde hir husbonde hooli the gouernaunce,      1040  
Hym requeryng for to do vengauunce  
Vpon this crym, saide lik a trewe wiff,  
She wolde hir herte percen with a knyff.
- that she would take her own life, as the lesser evil.      In this mater this was hir fantasie:      1044  
Bet was to deie than to lyue in shame,  
And lasse wikke, to putte in iupartie  
Hir mortal bodi than hir good[e] fame.  
Whan honour deieth, farweel a manys name!      1048  
Bet it were out off this liff disseuere,  
Than sclaundrous fame to slen a man for euere.

1017. Cellatyne R.

1018. luxurie R, P, luxury H, R 3.

1033. prente] present R, R 3.

1039. morwen] morowe R, morow R 3, P, morn H, J, morwyn H 5.

1042. this] his H.

1045. Bettir R.      1046. wikke] wikkid was R.

1049. Bettir R.

But to that purpos hir husbonde seide nay,  
 Hir fader also was therto contrarie,\*  
 Makyng a promys, withoute mor delay,  
 To do vengeance how thei wil nat tarie.  
 To hir declaryng with resouns debonarie,  
 Vnder these woordis trouthe & riht conserued,  
 To slen hirsilff she hath nothyng disserued:

1052 But Collatine  
 and her father  
 said no, prom-  
 ising to do  
 vengeance at  
 once.

["My dere Lucrece, tempeste the nat at al,  
 We knowe thy menyng and thy clene entent,  
 Thy vertu prevyd in especial,  
 Which yevith to vs a ful pleyn argument,  
 Vn-to thavoutour thou gaff nevyr\* assent,  
 And for a more singuleer evydence,  
 Cryest euere to punysshe his greet offence.

1060 "My dear  
 Lucrece, do not  
 be troubled, we  
 know your  
 virtue.

Lyst nat cese, but euere theron abydest,  
 And al counfort doost fro thy-sylff refuse;  
 Thyng that was secre, in covert thou nat hydest,  
 But rygerously thavoutour doost accuse,  
 Wheer expert vertu thy renoun doth\* excuse.  
 Thy wyffly trouthe can bern also witnesse  
 By cleer repoort to vs of thy clenness.

1064

1068 "You cry out  
 on this offence  
 without com-  
 fort, you conceal  
 nothing from  
 us, you have  
 always been a  
 model of wifely

For in the eyen of folkys ferre and neer,  
 The glorye and honour of wyffly chasteite  
 Hath to this day with bryghte beemys cleer  
 In thy persone enlvmyned this cyte.  
 For bothe in opyn and also in secre  
 The fame hath flouryd of thy chaast[e] name,  
 Fre fro thatwytyng of ony spot of blame.

1072 propriety, we  
 know ourselves  
 that you are a

1076

We can our-sylff recordyn and expresse,  
 How thy delyght and thyn hertly plesaunce  
 Was to worshepe wyffly sobirnesse,  
 And to werreye al chaunge and varyaunce,  
 Lyk a lanterne set vp of constaunce,  
 Or lyk a merour, in euery mannys syght,  
 Off good exauple to yive al othir lyght.

1080 lantern, a  
 mirror of con-  
 stancy.

1084

1052, 54, 55. contraire, taire, debonaire B.

1055. resoun H. 1056. these] ther H.

1058. The following six stanzas are omitted in B, H, J, H 5, P.

The text is supplied from Harley 1766, fol. 102 recto.

1058. the] om. R.

1062. nevyr] nevyr thyn Harley 1766.

1069. doth] doost Harley 1766.

1077. hath] om. R.

1078. thatwytyng] the awaytyng R.

"Don't you remember how Tarquin and I found you not long ago virtuously occupied amidst your maidens,

My trewe Lucrece, hastow nat in mynde,  
Nat yooore agoon, in verray sekirnesse,  
How thavoutour and I the did[e] fynde  
Amyd thy women in vertuous besynesse  
Occupyed, — a tokne of stedfastnesse,  
Therby concludyng of trouthe and of resoun,  
Modir of vertu is occupacyoun.

1088

1092

making them  
embroider in  
soft woolls,  
without thought  
of evil?

I fond the thanne, as I haue do ful offte,  
Among thy maydenys besily sitting,  
To make hem werke vpon wollys soffte,  
In ther werkyng hem womanly cherysshyn.  
On vicious lust ful smal was thy thynkyng;  
Wherefore, thow shuldyst of resoun advertyse,  
Tatempre thy dool in more tendir wyse:]

1096

"You were  
trapped like a  
fowl in a snare,  
and you think  
your good name  
is lost.

For sodenli and also onauised,  
As a foul is trappid in a snare,  
Be onwar fraude vpon the practised,  
Thou were deceyued, pleyntly to declare,  
Hauyng this conceit, hard is to repare  
The name off hem which falsli be diffamed,  
Whan wrong report the[r] hih renoun hath shamed.

1100

1104

"But this is  
impossible.

Touchyng thi persone, I dar afferme & seyn,  
That it were a maner impossible,  
And lik a thyng which neuer yit was seyn,  
That thi worshepe was founde corruptible,  
But stedfast ay and indyuysible,  
Ondepartid in vertu and maad strong,  
And now desirous tauenge thi pitous wrong.

1108

1112

"We will be  
avenged on  
your wrong.

On thyn iniurie we shal auengid be,  
Considred first the dedli heuynesse  
Which thou suffredist bi gret aduersite,  
Whan thauoutour thi\* beute dede oppresse,  
And reioishyng bi a fals glādesse,  
Maugre thi will[e], as a theeff be nyht  
The encoumbred off veray force & myht.

1116

1120

1091. 2nd of] *om.* R.

1092. of] and Harley 1766.

1096. hem womanly] womanly hem R.

1100. also] al H. 1104. is] it is R.

1106. ther] the J, H, R 3, H 5, P.

1113. now] not H.

1114. shal] shullen R.

1117. thi] thei B.



- But yiff thou woldist leue al thi moornyng [p. 102] "Only restrain  
 And restreyne thyn inportable wo, your sorrow  
 Thou sholdist seen so egal a punshyng and you will  
 Vpon thi moste froward mortal fo, see exemplary  
 To warne alle othre, thei shal no mor do so, punishment  
 In chastisyng off fals auoutrie, dealt to your  
 The and thi renoun off riht to magnefie. enemy, as a  
 warning to all  
 others.
- What was diffacyng to thi trewe entent, 1124  
 Thouh his youthe onbridled wente at large, 1128 "His unbridled  
 So for tafforce a celi innocent? youth did not  
 Whos wikkednesse ouhte to bere the charge, prejudice your  
 And we off riht thi conscience discharge. honesty;  
 The ioie onleefful off his fals plesaunce, 1132  
 With double palme thyn honour doth auauunce.
- Conceyue and see, o thou my Lucrece,  
 How that resoun and good discrecioun  
 Sholde thi trouble & thi mournyng cese, 1136 reason and dis-  
 Off riht restreyne thyn opynyoun, cretion both  
 So reklesli to do punycioun, demand that  
 With knyf on honde to slen thisilff, alas! you should not  
 For othres gilt, and dedist no trespass. sacrifice your  
 Lat be, Lucrece, lat been al thi dool, life for an-  
 Cese thi compleynt & thi wo restreyne. other's gilt.  
 Sholde I fro the lyue alone al sool, 1140  
 And thi deth perpetueli compleyne? "Lay aside  
 To putte thi fader in inportable peyne, — your sorrow,  
 Off our weelfare be nat so rek[el]les, Lucrece, and do  
 To deie and leue our childre moodirles. 1144 not be so reck-  
 Off prudence eek thou ouhtest for to see less of our  
 And aduertise onli off resoun, welfare!  
 Thouh off force thi bodi corrupt be, 1148  
 Thi soule inward and thyn entencioun "Your soul is  
 Fraunchised been from al corrupcioun. free from all  
 Offens is noon, considre in thyn entent, corruption;  
 But will and herte yiue therto ful consent. 1152  
 Thou were nakid in thi bed liggyng, 1156 it is not sur-  
 Alone, onwar, slepyng and void off myht, prising that a  
 Suspeciouunles al off his comyng, weak woman  
 should be over-  
 come by a  
 strong man.

1122. Importable H.

1131. ouhte to] of riht ouht R. 1132. off riht] also R.

1133. fals] hertly R. 1140. on] in R.

1142. thi] this R. 1144. al] and R. 1146. importable H.

1151. corruptid H. 1158. al] as H, H 5, R 3—Suspicioules P.

- That tyme namli, because that it was nyht.  
A feerful woman, and he an hardi knyht, 1160  
Al-be-it so onknyhtli was his deede,  
With nakid suerd tassaile thi womanheede.
- “Yet I know  
that for all his  
strength he  
never could  
compel your  
heart to yield.” He myhte thi bodi be force weel oppresse  
Be sleihti weies that he hadde souht; 1164  
But weel wot I, for al his sturdynesse,  
He myhte neuer ha[ue] maistri off thi thouht.  
The bodi yolde, the herte yald hym nouht.  
Ye wer[en] tweyne, thou feeble & he riht strong, 1168  
Thi trouthe afforced, he werkere off the wrong.
- “What is more  
praiseworthy  
than the contrast  
between  
his fraud and  
your constancy?” Where myhtistou ha[ue] grettere price or laude,  
Al riht considred, trouthe and equite:  
First countirpeised his force & sleihti fraude, 1172  
Thanne to perseuere in femynyte  
With thouht onchaungid, & in fragilite  
Off womanheed to haue an herte stable, —  
What thyng in the myht be mor comendable? 1176
- “We know well  
that the tyrant  
found you more  
like an image  
of stone than a  
being of flesh  
and blood.” It is weel knowe thou were off herte ay oon,  
To all fals lustis contraire in gouernaunce,  
Mor lik an ymage korue out off a ston,  
Than lik a woman flesshli off plesaunce 1180  
The tirant fond the in cheer & contenaunce,  
Which euer afftir be womanli victorie\*  
Shal be ascryued to thyn encres off glorie.
- “Your father  
and I have  
both excused  
you, so do not  
think of killing  
yourself.” Thi fadir Brutus hath the weel excusid, 1184  
Misilff also, thi blood & thi kynreede, —  
On this mater lat no mor be musid.  
To sle thisilff or do thi sidis bleede,  
Certis, Lucrece, thou hast ful litil neede; 1188  
It were gret wrong be al our iugement  
To spare a tirant and slen an innocent.
- “If you do, it  
will seem to  
some that you  
werp guilty;” Thi-silff to moordre, to summe it wolde seeme  
Thou were gilti, wher-as thou art cleene. 1192  
Dyuers wittis dyuersli wolde\* deeme,  
Reporte thyng thou neuer\* dedist meene.  
For which thou shalt pacientli susteene,  
1160. feerful R. 1164. out souht R.  
1165. sturdynesse] worthynesse H.  
1169. Thi] The R — he] of R.  
1174. &] om. R — fragilige R. 1182, 83. victoire, gloire B.  
1186. thi] thi H — mor] man H.  
1193. wolde] will B, R 3, wil J, P, wyl H 5.  
1194. And reporte R — thou neuer] that thou neuer R —  
neuer] non B, J, none P (which thou noon did meen R 3).

Till thi chast[e] wiffli innocence  
May seen hym punished for his violence.

1196

Folk wil nat deeme a persone innocent,  
Which wilfulli, whan he is nat coupable,  
Yildith hymselff to deth be iugement,  
And neuer afforn was off no gilt partable.  
His owne doom, vpon hymselff vengable,  
Causeth the peeple, thouth ther report be nouht,  
To deeme a thyng that neuer was doon nor thouht.

1200

for folk will not  
hold a person  
innocent who  
wilfully yields  
himself to  
death;

To been auengid vpon thyn owne liff,  
In excusyng off thi dedli diffame,  
To shewe thou art a trewe parfit wiff,  
Wenyng be deth to gete the a name, —  
In this deuyis thou art gretli to blame,  
Wher thou yit knowest thyn honour cleerli shyne,  
To yiue the peeple mater to deuyne."

[p. 103]

and if you did  
this you would  
be greatly to  
blame."

1208

¶ And with that woord Lucrece dede abraide,  
Ful dedli pale bothe off look and cheer,  
To them ageyn, euene thus she saide:  
"Lat be, husbonde, lat be, my fader deer,  
Spekith no mor to me off this mateer,  
List men dempte, in hyndryng off my name,  
I dradde deth mor than fals diffame.

1212

With that word  
Lucrece an-  
swered, "Let be,  
my husband  
and my father.

1216

Your counsail is, I shal my liff conserue  
To sorwe and sclaunder, but to no gladnesse;  
But lasse wikke is at an hour to sterue  
Than euer langwisshe in sorwe & heuynesse.  
Deth maketh an eende off al worldli distresse;  
And it was said sithe[n] ful yore ago,  
Bet is to deie than euer to lyue in wo.

1220

"Your counsel  
is that I shall  
live in sorrow;  
but it is less  
wrong to die  
than ever to  
languish in woe.

1224

Whan that worshepe in any creature  
Is slayn and ded be sclaunderous report,  
Bet is off deth the dreedful peyne endure,  
Than be fals noise ay luye in discomfort,  
Wher newe & newe diffame hath his resort,

1228

"When honour  
is slayn, it is  
better to endure  
death.

1204. nor] no R.

1218. deth mor] more deth R. 1219. my liff I shal H.

1221. wikkyd R.

1224. said] om. R — sithen] sithe J, P, sythen H 5 — yore]

longe R 3, yeere H 5.

1225, 28. Bettir R.

1229. discomfort H.

1230. diffame] fame R, H.

Neuer deieth, but quekith be thoutrage  
Off hatful tungen & venymous language. 1232

"Do your best  
to protect  
wifely chastity  
by taking ven-  
geance on the  
adulterer.

Doth your deuer to halwe & make stable  
The chast[e] chaumbres off wifli gouernaunce;  
For in this cas yiff ye be variable  
On fals auoutri for to do vengauce, 1236  
Ther shal folwe euerlastyng remembraunce,  
How trewe spousaile, as ye han herd deuysed,  
In your cite was broke and nat chastised.

"If you are  
found negligent,  
licentiousness/  
will run un-  
bridled at large.

Yiff ye be founde in such cas necligent 1240  
To punyssh e auoutours, off riht as is your charge,  
Thoruh your slouthe, as ye were off assent,  
Luxure onbridled shal renne abrod at large.  
Who shal thanne your conscience discharge, 1244  
Or what woman stonde in sekirnesse,  
Off Lucrece afforded the clenness?

"What joy  
would you  
have, dear hus-  
band, in loving  
me after Tar-  
quin's horrid  
crime?

O deere husbonde, what ioie sholde it be  
To thyn estat, in ony maner place, 1248  
Lich as thi wiff [for] to cherisshe me,  
Or in thyn armys me goodli to enbrace,  
The gilt horrible considred and trespase  
Be Tarquyn doon — alas and welaway! — 1252  
Which in my persone may neuer be wasshe away?

"And, my  
father, how can  
you call me  
daughter after  
this day?

And fader myn, how sholdestou me calle,  
Afftir this day, thyn owne douhter deere,  
Which am, alas, refus off women alle, 1256  
That to thi plesaunce was whilom most enteere,  
Withynne thi hous whan I dede lere,  
Bi cleer exaample off manyfold doctryne,  
Al that partened to vertuous disciplyne? 1260

"Having lost  
my virtue, I  
dare not even  
behold my own  
children!

Which I haue lost now in my daies olde,  
Disespiered it to recure ageyn.  
Myn owne childre, I dar hem nat beholde,  
Because the wombe in which that thei ha[ue] leyn 1264  
Diffouled is and pollut in certeyn,  
Which was tofor in chastite conserued.  
Chastisith thauoutour, as he hath disserued!

1241. avoutrers R.

1243. Luxury H, R 3, Luxurie P — renne abrod] goone aboute  
R, ryn about R 3.

1245. schall stonde R. 1249. for] om. J.

1258. thi] thyne R, thyn H, R 3, H 5. 1262. Dispeired R.

1264. the] that the R — haue] om. R. 1265. pollutid H.

And for my part to speke in woordes fewe,  
 Lenger to lyue I ha[ue] no fantasie;  
 For wher sholde I out my face shewe,  
 Or dore appeere in any cumpanye,  
 Sithe a dirk spotte off fals auoutrie  
 Shal euer encrece\*, wher it be fals or trewe,  
 Into myn hyndryng the slaundre to renewe?

1268 "Nor have I  
 the desire to  
 live longer:  
 defouled, I dare  
 not appear in  
 any company.

Lust afforcid hath a fals appetit,  
 Of freelte includid\* in Nature;  
 Maugre the will, ther folweth a delit,  
 As summe folk seyn, in eueri creature.  
 Good fame lost, ful hard is to recure;  
 And sithe I may myn harmys nat redresse,  
 To you in open my gilt I will confesse.

1272

1276 "Lust afforcid  
 has a false ap-  
 petite, delight  
 follows, even  
 though it be  
 against the  
 will;

Al-be I was ageyn my will oppressid,  
 Ther was a maner constreyned lust in deede,  
 Which for noun power myht nat be redressid,  
 For febilnesse I stood in so gret dreede.  
 For which offence deth shal be my meede,  
 Sith leuer I haue with sum egge tool  
 To sle mysilff, than lyue in slaundre & dool.

1280

1284 and as such  
 was my experi-  
 ence, I would  
 rather kill my-  
 self with some  
 edged weapon  
 than live in  
 disgrace.

O fader myn, spare and ha[ue] pite!  
 And deere husbonde, rewe on myn offence!  
 Goddis & goddessis callid off chastite,  
 To my trespase graunteth an indulgence;  
 For off my gilt to make a recompence,  
 Wher that Venus gat in me auantage,  
 Deth shal redresse & chastise myn outrage.

[p. 104] "The gods and  
 goddesses of  
 chastity grant  
 this indulgence,  
 that death may  
 redress my  
 1292 wrong-doing.

For yiff I sholde make a delay  
 To perce my brest bi sharpnesse off a knyff,  
 Men wolde deeme and sey fro day to day,  
 To make my slaundre mor open & mor ryff,  
 How that I was mor tendir off my lyff  
 Than off my worshep, which wer to gret a shame, —  
 To loue my liff mor than my good[e] name!

1288

1296 "If I delay,  
 men will think  
 that I loved  
 life more than  
 my good name.

1300

1270. out my face] my face out R.

1273. euer encrece] euermore B, euermore J — wher] whedir H.

1274. renewe] remewe H.

1276. includid] includyng R, concludid hoolly H, encludid  
 hoolly R 3, the word includid is repeated in B, J, H 5.

1281. my gilt in open R. 1282. Al-be] Also R.

1283. Ther] the H. 1284. noun] no R.

1287. Sith] And R. 1290. deere] trew H.

1291. callid] om. R. 1297. a] om. H.

- "No witness is  
so good as  
blood shed with  
a knife. In this mateer no wittenesse is so good,  
To putte a-way al fals suspeciou<sup>n</sup>, 1304  
As with a knyff to sheede myn herte blood:  
I myht nat make a bet purgacioun  
To alle folk that ha[ue] discrecioun<sup>n</sup>,  
Than fynali be my deth texcuse 1308  
The gilt horrible, off which men me accuse.
- "Go forth, my  
soul, before the  
judges infernal,  
who will decide  
that my con-  
science was  
pure; Go foorth my soule, peur & inmortal,  
Cheeff[e] wittenesse off myn innocence,  
Tofor tho iuges which be infernal: 1312  
First Mynos, kyng, to deeme my conscience,  
With Radamanthus to yeuen a-sentence  
Lik my desert, that it may be seene,  
In wifli trouthe how that I was cleene. 1316
- and let my  
blood stir and  
excite the  
people to exile  
all kings for  
Tarquin's sake. Thou ertheli body, which thoruh thi fairnesse  
Were to auoutri ful gret occasioun,  
Off thi blood sheede out the red[e]nesse,  
And be thi sides late it raile down; 1320  
Stere and excite the peeple off this toun  
To doon ther deuer, withynne a litil while,  
For loue off Tarquyn, alle kynges to exile.
- "Do not delay  
your ven-  
geance." And first I praie, myn husbonde most enteere, 1324  
Off this vengau<sup>n</sup>ce to make no delay;  
With helpe & socour off my fader deere  
To punysse she thauoutour, in al the haste ye may;  
Let hym take his wages and his pay, 1328  
Lik as ye seen, and pley<sup>n</sup>li now conceyue,  
For his offence the deth I do receyue."
- And suddenly,  
before they  
knew what she  
was doing, she  
took a knife and  
pierced her  
heart and  
fell down dead  
at their feet. And sodenli, or thei myhte aduerte,  
She took a knyff, and with gret violence, 1332  
Thoruh the brest, euene onto the herte  
She made it glide, — ther was no resistance.  
Ful pale and ded fill down in ther presence.  
And bi occasioun\* off this pitous deede, 1336  
Tarquyn exilid, and hooli his kenreede.

1306. myht] may R — bet] bettir R.

1308. Than] &amp; H — texcuse] excuse R.

1309. accuse] excuse R.

1310. peur] pore R — &amp;] and R — Immortal H.

1312. tho] the R, H, R 3. 1319. thi] the H.

1326. &amp;] om. R.

1328. pay] play R, pray H.

1330. do] now R.

1336. bi occasioun] boccasioun B, bi the occasion R.



For which[e] cause, be record off writyng,  
 Was ther neuer in Rome the cite,  
 Afftir that day no man crownyd kyng,  
 As in cronycles ye may beholde and see.  
 Thus for luxur[y]e and ther cruelte,  
 Ther tyrannye and fals extorsioun,  
 Thei wer exilid out off Rome toun.

1340

For this reason  
 there was never  
 after a king in  
 Rome.

1344

[How Rome afftir was gouerned and virginea bi hir  
 fadir slayn.] <sup>1</sup>

**G**OUERNED afftir bi other officeres,  
 As is remembred in Titus Lyuyus,  
 Callid decemvir of dyuers cronycleres;  
 Among[es] which ther was on Appius,  
 A iuge ontrewre, proud and luxurious,  
 Which thoruh the cite, the story berth witnesse,  
 Behatid was for his gret falsnesse.

1348

Rome was  
 afterwards  
 governed by  
 decemvirs,  
 among whom  
 was Appius,  
 hated for his  
 dishonesty.

And onys it fill, as he caste his look  
 Vpon a maide most inli fair off siht,  
 A fals desir withynne his herte he took  
 Hir to disuse, ageyn al skele and riht.  
 And she was douhter to a worthi knyht,  
 Ful manli founde in his deedis all,  
 And Virginius the Romeyns dede hym call.

1352

He once saw a  
 young girl,  
 daughter of  
 Virginius, of  
 whom he  
 wished to have  
 possession.

1356

Whos goodli douhter, the story doth us lere,  
 Was afftir hym for his noble fame  
 Virginia callid, most goodli & enteere;  
 And for this cause she bar the same name.  
 But Appius ful gretli was to blame,  
 Which hath conspired thoruh his gret falsnesse,  
 Yiff that he myhte hir beute to oppresse.

1360

Hir name was  
 Virginia.

This iuge ontrewre bothe in thouht and deede,  
 Off lawe onrihtful souhte out occasioun;  
 Made a sergeant off his to proceede,  
 Ageyn this maide to take an accioun,  
 Cleymed hir his seruaut bi fals collusioun.  
 And this was doon be Appius off entent  
 That he on hir myht yiue a iugement.

1364

1368

This dishonest  
 judge caused a  
 sergeant-at-law  
 to proceed  
 against her on a  
 false charge,

1372

1346. in] bi H, by R 3.

1366. and] in R. 1368. to] go R.

1369. maide] mateer R. 1370. Cleymed] Cleym H.

1372. on] of H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 43 verso.

so that he  
might find op-  
portunity to  
accomplish his  
desire.

And be this mene, in his fals delit,  
Thouhte he myhte hir beute best disuse,  
So for taccomplisshe his flesschli appetit,  
She beyng feeble thaccioun to refuse.  
Wherupon hir fader gan to muse,  
Fulli conceyued off Appius the maner,  
In hir diffence wrouhte as ye shal heer.

[p. 105]

1376

After Appius  
had decided  
against her,  
her father took  
her to one side  
and stabbed  
her to the  
heart.

Whan Appius hadde youe his iugement  
Ageyn this maide, which afor hym stood,  
Hir manli fadir, most knyghtli off entent,  
Took hir appart, as he thouhte it good,  
And with a knyff shadde hir herte blood:  
Dempte it bettre to slen hir in clenness,  
Than the tirant hir beute sholde oppresse.

1380

1384

Her chastity  
was preserved.

Thus hool conserued was hir chastite\*  
And ondefoulid was hir maydenheede;  
For Virginius to keepe hir honeste  
Spared no thyng to make hir sides bleede.  
But Appius for this horrible deede,  
And decemvir, thoruh this onhappi chaunce,  
Hadde in that cite neuer afftir gouernaunce.

1388

1392

Appius went to  
prison and  
there slew him-  
self.

¶ As the story maketh also mencion,  
Appius, ashamed off this deede,  
Slouh hymself[e] fetrid in prisoun:  
Off a fals iuge, loo heer the fynal meede!  
And tho tribuni in Rome gan succeede,  
Twen riht & wrong treuli to discerne,  
And Romayn lawes iustli to gouerne.

1396

1400

Thus princes  
may be over-  
thrown by poor  
men, who are  
sometimes or-  
dained by God  
to chastise the  
proud,

Men may heer seen as in a merour cleer,  
Estatys chaungid for ther gret offenscis;  
And be sum poore persone synguleer  
Pryncis put down from ther magnyficencis,  
Which nat considre in ther gret excellencis,  
How God ordeyneth his yerde [in] sundri wise,  
The poore sumwhile the pompous to chastise.

1404

1379. hir] his H.  
1383. it] it was R. 1384. shadde] he shad H.  
1387. chastite] virgynyte B, J, R.  
1389. honeste] virgynyte H. 1391. this] his R, thi H.  
1392. thoruh this] for his H. 1395. this] his R.  
1398. Tribunes H — began to R. 1399. Betwene R.  
1402. offence R. 1404. magnyficence R.  
1405. excellence R.  
1406. ordeynyd H, ordeyned R 3 — in] om. H, H 5.  
1407. sumwhile] sumtyme R

¶ Heeron to shewe example anon riht,  
 Markid in story for a notable thyng,  
 Pausanias, off Grece a manli knyht,  
 Off Macedonye slouh Phelipp the kyng  
 At a table where he was sittying  
 Tween Alisandre and Olimpiades,  
 His wrong tauengen, amyddis al the pres.

1408 as was Pausanias, who slew Philip of Macedon,

1412

¶ Eek Salmator, a knyht off low degre,  
 For wronges doon in especiall,  
 Off manli force groundid on equite  
 Slouh off Cartage the prynce Hastruball,  
 Which brother was onto Duc Hanyball,  
 Beside a ryuer, as thei mette in bataile,  
 Callid Metaure, which renneth in Ytaile.

and Salmator, who killed Hasdrubal of Carthage at the River Metaurus.

1420

Wherefore, ye Pryncis, yiff ye list longe endure,  
 Beth riht weel war, be ye neuer so strong,  
 In your lordshepis nat to moche assure  
 Off surquedie the poraile to do wrong,  
 In your discrecioun conceyuyng euer a-mong,  
 Grettest dreed is, that may your staat assaile,  
 Whan subieccioun doth in the peeple faile.

Wherefore, Princes, if you would live long, do no wrong to the poor.

1424

1428

### ¶ Lenvoy.

THIS tragedie declarereth in partie,  
 What myscheef folweth of extorsioun,  
 Eek off spousbrech and of auoutrie  
 Be Tarquyn doon thoruh fals oppressioun  
 Onto Lucrece withynne Rome toun;  
 Kynges exiled for such mysgouvernaile  
 And fals outrages doon to the poraile.

This tragedy shews the mischief that follows extortion and adultery,

1432

Eek Appius, off wilful tirannye,  
 Ageyn Virginia took an accioun,  
 Thoruh a fals lust off froward lecherie,  
 Blent and fordirked his memorie\* & resoun,  
 Which was cheeff cause and occasioun  
 Whi thestat off dishomme dede faile,  
 Thoruh fals outrages doon to the poraile.

1436 tyranny and false lust,

1440

1410. Pausamyas R — a] a ful R — manli] notable H.  
 1413. Betwene R. 1414. in myddis R. 1422. ye] om. R.  
 1427. statis R. 1428. doth] don H. 1432. thoruh] bi R.  
 1439. memoire B.  
 1441. dishomme] dishome R, H, thi Name (Na in later band)  
 H 5, decemvir R 3, Decemuir P.

and especially  
outrages done  
to the poor.

Kyng Phelipp loste sceptre and regalie  
Off Macedonye the famous regeoun, 1444  
Onwarli slay[e]n, myd his cheualrie  
Sittyng at mete withynne his cheeff dongoun.  
And grettest cause off his fallyng down,  
Was whan Fortune his pride dede assaile 1448  
For fals outrages doon to the poraile.

Even Duke  
Hasdrubal, for  
all his renown,  
was slain by a  
servant.

Duk Hastrubal, whom bokis magnefie  
Vp to the heuene for his hih renoun,  
Whos tryumphes rauht up to the skie, 1452  
And hadde al Cartage in his subieccioun, —  
Yit was he slayn onwarli be tresoun,  
Be a seruant; loo, what doth\* disauaile  
Treson purposid afor in the poraile! 1456

Noble Princes,  
govern your  
people pru-  
dently; for  
nothing can  
avail you more  
than the re-  
spect of the  
poor.

Noble Pryncis, your resoun doth applie, [p. 106]  
Whiche ouer the peeple ha[ue] dominacioun,  
So prudentli to gouerne hem and guie,  
That loue and dreed be trewe affecioun 1460  
Preserue ther hertis from fals rebellioun,  
Sithe to your hihnesse nothyng may mor preuaile  
Than trewe subieccioun expert in the poraile.

[How Ieroboam Kyng of Israel for Idolatrie and  
disobedience cam to mischeues ende.]<sup>1</sup>

Of six kings  
who next ap-  
peared to  
Bochas, Jero-  
boam spoke first,

**N**EXT these stories, in Bochas as I fynde, 1464  
Ther dede appeere onto his presence  
Kynges sexe, hym praieng to ha[ue] mynde  
Vpon ther fall be onwar violence  
From ther estatis off roial excellence. 1468  
And toforn alle, I fynde, that ther cam  
Off al Israel kyng Ieroboam.

declaring his  
fall with a pale  
face.

Onto myn auctour he began\* declare  
His dedli compleynt with a pale face, 1472  
His gret myscheuys and his euel fare,  
And how he fill down from his kynгли place  
Thoruh gret onhappis, which dede his herte embrace,

1448. Was] *om.* R.

1449. outrage R. 1451, 52. Vp to] vnto R.

1455. doth] it doth B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P — auaille P.

1461. ther] your R — fals] al R. 1462. nothyng may]  
may no thyng R.

1471. began] began to B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P.

1472. fale] ful pale R. 1475. happis R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 44 recto.

And, as this story pley[n]li hath deuysed, 1476  
For his offencis how he was chastised.

An ydolatre\* he was, as it is told, 1480  
Reised up auteres, off veray force & myht,  
Set therupon too calueren of peur gold,  
Dede hem worshepe, ageyn al skele & riht,  
Gaff euel exa[m]ple in the peeplis siht,  
Whan he dede with fumys and encens  
To fals ydoles ondeu reuerens. 1484

He was an  
idolater, who  
set up two  
golden calves,

Fro the temple he made the peeple gon,  
Preestis ordeyned afftir his owne guise,  
Forsook the tribe off Leuy and Aaron,  
And vpon Bethel his offryng gan deuise. 1488  
And whil he dede onleefful sacrefise,  
God, that weel knew off hym the fals entent,  
Fro Ierusalem a prophete to hym sent.

and ordained  
priests in his  
own fashion.

Which hym rebuked off his mysgouernaunce, 1492  
And gan the pereiles to hym specefie;  
Told hym afor[n]e, for to do vengau[n]ce  
Off Daud[s] kyn ther sholde come on Iosie,  
Which sholde his preestis, that falsli coude lie, 1496  
Manli destroie, and slen hem alle attonys  
And into asshes brenne hem flessch and bonys.

God sent a  
prophet,  
Jadan, to re-  
buke him, say-  
ing that his  
priests would  
be destroyed by  
Joshua,

And in tokne off ther destruccioun,  
The prophete told among hem all, 1500  
How his auteris sholde bowe doun,  
And his ydoles from ther stage fall,  
Whom that foolis ther goddis falsli call,  
Which ha[ue] no power to helpe in no manere, 1504  
For thei may nouthur feele, see nor heere.

and that his  
idols, called  
gods by fools,  
would be over-  
thrown.

Afftir this prophete, Iadan, hadde told  
These said[e] signes pley[n]li to the kyng,  
His auter fill on pecis manyfold, 1508

After Jadan  
had finished  
speaking, the  
altar fell to  
pieces.

1476. this] his R. 1477. offence H. 1478. ydolastre B.

1479. auteres] Aucterz H.

1480. Ther vpon sett R — too] om. H — caluys R, calves R 3,  
calues P — peur] cleen H.

1483. he] that he H. 1489. whil] whan R.

1493. bi gan R. 1495. Daudy H, R 3, H 5.

1502. stages R.

1505. nouthur feele see nor] neither se feele ne heer R — feele  
see] see fele H, P, R 3 — nouthur] not R 3.

1506. Afftir] Afftir þat H. 1508. auteris fyllen R.

And ouerturned bakward his offryng;  
 For which the kyng, furiousli lokyng,  
 Put foorth his hand, the story maketh mynde,  
 Bad his men the prophete take and bynde. 1512

The king was  
 furious, and,  
 stretching out  
 his arm, ordered  
 Jadan to be  
 seized and  
 bound. But  
 suddenly his  
 arm dried up,

And as he his arm rauht out on lengthe,  
 Hadde no power it to withdrawe ageyn,  
 Wex onweeldi, contract and lost his strengthe.  
 And whan the kyng hath these toknys seyn, 1516  
 And how the prophete spak no woord in veyn,  
 Gretli astonyd, koude sey no more,  
 But prai[e]de Iadan his arm for to restore.

and only by  
 Jadan's prayer  
 was it restored.

And be his praier and mediacioun, 1520  
 Off his arm, afftir this vengauunce,  
 Ther was anon maad restitucioun,  
 And off his peyne feelith alegaunce.  
 For which the kyng, with ful gret instaunce, 1524  
 Requered hym to be so gracious,  
 That day tabide and dynen in his hous.

The king then  
 invited Jadan  
 to dine with  
 him, but  
 Jadan refused  
 and went away.

But the prophete wolde nat assente,  
 Nouthur with hym to ete nor to drynke; 1528  
 Took his asse, and foorth anon he wente,  
 On whose departyng the kyng gan sore thynke,  
 And fantasies gan in his herte synke,  
 Speciali whan he taketh heede 1532  
 Off all his toknys, how thei were trewe in deede.

God had com-  
 manded him  
 neither to eat  
 nor drink in  
 that city.

God bad Iadan in this gret emprise  
 To Ieroboam first whan he was sent,  
 Ete nor drynke, in no maner wise, 1536  
 In that cite whil he was present;  
 But a-nother prophete off entent,  
 Ful old and slyh, on the tother side,  
 Compellid hath this Iadan to abide. 1540

But one of  
 Jeroboam's  
 false prophets  
 persuaded him  
 to disobey  
 God's com-  
 mandment,

Hym afforcyng be fals collusioun [p. 107]  
 To resorte ageyn to\* the cite,  
 And to make no contradiccoun  
 With hym to dyne off fraternyte, 1544  
 To hym affermyng, it may non other be:

1519. for] *om.* R. 1524. ful] *om.* H. 1525. Requeryng H.  
 1528. nor to drynke] neithir drynke R.  
 1534. Iadan] Iason R. 1535. Ieroboam] Ierusalem R.  
 1536. nor] neithir R. 1537. while that R.  
 1538. But yit R. 1539. on the tother] vpon that oper R.  
 1542. to] onto B, J — the] that R.



For God sent hym as to his freend and brother,  
Tapide with hym & pleynli with non other,

Off freendliheed and trewe affeccioun

1548 and while they  
sat at meat  
together, God  
said to Jadan,

Withynne his hous to shewen his presence,

For a repast and a refeccioun:

This Godis will and fulli his sentence.

To whos woordis the prophete gaff credence.

1552

And as thei sat at dyner bothe ifeere,

God onto Iadan seide in this manere:

"For the brekyng off my comaundement,

Thi grete offence and transgressioun,

1556

That thou hast been so wilful negligent,

Thou shalt endure this punycioun,

Been\* al to-torn and rent off a leoun,

And in thi cuntre thou shalt nat recure,

With prophetis to haue thi sepulture."

1560

"For breaking  
my command-  
ment, thou  
shalt be slain  
by a lion and  
never return to  
thy country."

Off which[e] tithyng, this Iadan nothyng fayn,

Gan to departe with a ful heuy thouht:

Off a leoun myd off the weye slayn;

But his asse harmyd was riht nouht.

A ful gret merueile, yiff it be weel souht,

The leoun sittynge as in ther diffence,

And kept hem bothe from al violence.

1568

Alle these toknys myht[e] nat conuerte

Ieroboam from\* his iniquite;

Godis warnyng hym list nat to aduerte,

Nor be his prophete correctid for to be.

Wherfore, God wolde that he sholde see

Vengaunce folwe, as it fill in deede,

Bothe vpon hym and [on] his kynreede.

1572

and Jeroboam  
continued in  
his iniquity.

A sone he hadde, which fill in gret siknesse,

Callid Abimen, the book doth specefie;

For which the kyng bad the queen hir dresse,

To gon disguised, withoute cumpanye,

Onto a prophete\* which callid was Achye,

1576

His son Abijah  
fell ill, and he  
bade the queen  
go disguised to  
the prophet  
Abijah for ad-  
vice.

Hym to requere, treuli for to seye

1580

Whethir the child sholde lyue or deye.

1551. This is R. 1554. in] on H. 1559. Been] Bien B.

1562. tydyngis R. 1563. Began R — ful] om. R.

1564. myd] in the myddis R. 1570. from] for B.

1574. as] riht as R.

1575. on] also on R, om. H, J, R 3, H 5, P.

1580. a] the H — On taprophete B — was] is H — Ahye P.

But God  
shewed Ahijah  
that it was  
Jeroboam's  
wife who came  
to him,

And in his inward sihte contemplatiff,  
God shewed hym bi cleer inspeccioun, 1584  
Off Ieroboam how she was the wiff,  
For al hir sleiht transformacioun.  
For nouthur fallas nor fals decepcioun  
May be to God, but it be parceyued; 1588  
For he nys prophetis may nat be deceyued.

and he told her  
to inform  
Jeroboam, that  
since God had  
raised him  
from a servant  
to a king,

She cam to hym in a straunge weede;  
At thentryng he callid hir bi hir name:  
"Com foorth," quod he, "for it is no neede 1592  
To hide thi-silff[e], as it were for shame;  
For the trouthe treuli to attame,\*  
God hath youe me fulli knowlechyng  
What thou shalt answer & seyn onto the kyng. 1596

and as he was  
ungrateful and  
an idolater,

Sey pleyntli to hym, & marke it in thi thouht,  
In thi repair these woordis rehersyng,  
'Sith God hath maad the, & reised the up off nouht,  
From a seruaunt to regnen as a kyng, 1600  
Fro Daudidis kyn, most worthi[ly] regnyng,  
Partid the kyngdam & youen it onto the,  
And thou onkynde theroff canst nothyng see,—

and had for-  
gotten God's  
goodness to  
him,

His grete goodnesse is out off remembraunce, 1604  
Fulli forgetyn off thi froward pride;  
In fals[e] goddis put thyn affiaunce,  
God aboue falsli set a-side,  
Wherefore from the anon he shal deuyde 1608  
Thy kyngdam hool, withoute mor delay,  
And fro thi lyne the crowne take away.

God would take  
the kingdom  
from him and  
his line and let  
dogs eat their  
carcasses.

And for thou hast to thi confusioun  
Thi feith, onfeithful, to false goddis take, 1612  
Wrongli refused thi relegeoun  
Off God aboue, & pleyntli hym forsake,  
This thende which that thou shalt make:  
The and thi kyn no man may socoure; 1616  
Flessh, skyn and bon houndis shal deuoure.

1583. his] hir H. 1587. neithir R.  
1589. nys] ne his R, J, P, nor his H, R 3 — he nys] henys H 5.  
1591. hir callid R. 1592. for] for certis R.  
1594. tattame B. 1596. answer & seyn] make answer R.  
1597. pleynt R. 1598. these] ther H. 1601. worthi J.  
1603. theroff] om. R.  
1607. God] And god R — settist R.  
1609. Thy] this H, The R. 1610. schal take R.  
1615. This is the eende R — that] om. R.

And at then tryng hom to thi cite,  
 Thi sone and his, thou shalt fynde hym ded,  
 Off al his kyn thouh ther was non but he  
 Founde veray good[e]; tak heeroff good heed.”  
 Off which answeere the queen fill in gret dreed,  
 En tryng the cite in especiall,  
 Hir child was ded, & lay cold be the wall.

1620 “And you’ll  
 find your son  
 dead when you  
 go home.”

Off this warnyng the kyng took non heed, [p. 108]  
 But made hym redi with ful gret apparaile, —  
 Fourti thousand with hym he dede leed  
 Off manli men armed in plate & maile,  
 With kyng Abias to haue a gret bataile.  
 The which Abias, that was off Iuda kyng,  
 Onto his peeple saide at ther meetyng:

1628 The king  
 didn’t care, and  
 set out to fight  
 Abijah, king of  
 Judah, who told  
 his soldiers that  
 God would not  
 allow an idola-  
 ter to defeat  
 them,

“O noble knyhtis, hath o thyng in memorie,\*  
 No man venquysshith, platli to conclude,  
 With gret peeple, nor getith hym victorie  
 With nombres hepid nor gret multitude;  
 Fals ydolatres, God will hem dillude,  
 Nat suffre his seruauantis that be trewe & sad  
 Off mescreantis to been ouerlad.

1632

Tryumphe is non founde off newe or old  
 In these ydoles off ston nor siluer sheene,  
 Nor in caluere off metal maad or gold,  
 Youe to that parti which ontreuli meene.  
 And sithe that God knoweth our quarel cleene,  
 Ther is non hope, force non nor myht  
 With hem that grounde hem a cause ageyn[e]s ryht.

1636

1640 and that the  
 golden calves  
 would be of no  
 avail to Jero-  
 boam.

Hope off victorie\* stant on rihtwisnesse,  
 Off them that caste ther synful liff tamende,  
 And list forsake wrong and al falsnesse,  
 And with hool herte onto the Lord entende;  
 Which shal this day his grace to you sende,

1644

1648 “Hope of vic-  
 tory stands on  
 righteousness,”  
 said he.

1622. queen] kyng R.

1624. Hir] His R — wall] way R.

1626. ful] om. R.

1629. kyng] om. H, R 3 — to haue a gret bataile] to haven  
 in bataile R.

1632. hath] haue R. 1632, 34. memoire, victoire B.

1634. nor] neithir R, om. H — hym] om. R, J, P.

1636. ydolatreris R. 1639. Tryumphe R — or] nor R.

1640. nor] & R. 1641. caluere] caluys R, calues P, R 3.

1644. nor] ne R. 1646. victoire B.

1649. hool] the hool R. 1650. his] om. H.

Our trewe cause iustly\* to termyne."  
And thus Abias gan his tale fyne.

1652

Fifty thousand  
of Jeroboam's  
men were slain,

His preestis gan ther trumpes for to blowe;  
And kyng Abias thoruh his hih renoun  
Gaff to his peeple, bothe to hih & lowe,  
Ful manli confort and consolacioun.  
And fifti thousand be computacioun  
Wer slayn that day, which ful proudli cam  
Vpon the parti off kyng Ieroboam.

1656

and Jeroboam  
and all his line  
were eaten by  
dogs.

And al the parti off Ieroboam,  
And al that wer[e]n off his lyne born,  
Afftir this bataile onto myscheeff cam,  
Whan thei were slayn, with houndis al to-torn,  
As the prophete hadde hem told befor.  
But for the kyng took therooff non heed,  
With sodeyn vengauunce God quit hym his meed.

1660

1664

[How Zareas Kyng of Ethiope was slayn in bataile.] <sup>1</sup>

After Jeroboam,  
Zerah, king of  
Ethiopia and  
India, appeared,  
almost blind for  
weeping, for he  
had been de-  
spoiled of his  
wealth and  
slain in battle  
by King Asa.

A FFTIR hym to Bochas dede appeere,  
Next in ordre pleynli, as I fynde,  
On Zareas, with a sorweful cheere.  
And he was kyng off Ethiope and Ynde,  
Whos eyen wern almost with wepyng blynde,  
Praieng myn auctour, his onhappi chaunce  
With othre woful to putte in remembraunce,

1668

1672

And that he wolde recorden be scripture  
His sodeyn fall and dolorous distresse,  
And his diffamous hatful disconfiture,  
With the dispoilyng off his gret richesse,  
And how kyng Asaph, thoruh his hih noblesse,  
Myd\* his peeple, as he dede hym assaile,  
Hath hym venquysshid & slay[e]n in bataile.

1676

1680

1651. iustly] treuli B, truly J, P, trewly H 5.

1652. his tale] take his R. 1656. manli] many H.

1659. kyng] om. R.

1669. 3oreas H.

1671. with wepyng almost R.

1672. his] that his H.

1676. diffamous] famous R — scomfiture H.

1678. hih] om. H — Asaph] Asa P.

1679. Myd] And B, J, H 5, P, Amyd R 3 In myddis R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 45 recto.

[How Adab kyng of Ierusalem lost sceptre & crowne.]<sup>1</sup>

OFF Israel than cam the woful kyng  
 Callid Adab, ful pitousli wepyng,  
 Onto Bochas his compleynt rehersyng,  
 How kyng Basa, be subtil fals werkyng,  
 With sodeyn slauhtre caused his fallyng,  
 Whan Fortune gan falsli [on hym] frowne,  
 And took oniustli from hym sceptre & crowne.

Next, King  
 Adab came to  
 complain of his  
 sudden slaugh-  
 ter by King  
 Baasha.

1684

[How the vengeable prince Zambrias set a toure on fire and brent himsilf.]<sup>1</sup>

NEXT cam Zambrias, a prince [ful] vengable,  
 Which slouh kyng Helam be fals tresoun,  
 That fond also Fortune ful onstable;  
 For this Zambrias off entencioun  
 Hath moordrid hym withynne the cheeff dongoun  
 Off his castell, with a ful gret[e] route,  
 As he onwarli laide a siege aboute.

Zimri, a  
 revengeful  
 prince, who  
 slew Elah,

1692

But Amaryn, a prynce off ful gret myht,  
 Cam into Tharse, a famous strong cite,  
 And cast hym pleyntli, lik a worthi knyht,  
 On this Zambrias auenged for to be,  
 Hym to destroie withoute merci or pite.  
 But into a\* tour as Zambrias wente,  
 Set it affire, and so hymself he brente.

burnt himself  
 up in a tower  
 to escape pun-  
 ishment at the  
 hands of Omri.

1696

1700

[Off Kyng Achab & Iezabel his wiff.]<sup>2</sup>

WYTH sihhes sore & wepyng inportable,  
 Cam kyng Achab onto Iohn Bochas,  
 Whos hertli sorwe was incomparable.  
 And, compleynyng, ful ofte [he] seide, alas!  
 Besechyng hym to write his woful cas,

King Achab,  
 with inportable  
 weeping, be-  
 sought Bochas  
 to write his  
 and his daugh-  
 ter Athaliah's  
 story.

1704

1681. woful] wolful R.

1682. Adas R, Nadab P. 1688. ful] om. H, J.

1689. fals] ful fals H, R 3, H 5. 1695. Amri P.

1696. into] to H — Tharsa P. 1697. worthi] manly R.

1699] om. R. 1700. inta B, in a R.

1701. he] om. R, R 3.

1704. hertli] erthly H. 1705. ful] of R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 45 recto.

<sup>2</sup> MS. J. leaf 45 verso.

- Compile his fallyng and the fate ifeere  
Off Athalia his owne douhter deere. 1708
- He was a wicked man and had a cruel and lustful wife called Jezebel. To God aboue most contrarious [p. 109]  
This Achab was in al his gouernaunce,  
And hadde a wiff cruel and lecherous  
Callid Iezabel, which set al hir plesauce 1712  
On Godis prophetis for to do vengauce:  
In the Bible ther malice men may see,  
And ydolatres\* thei were, bothe he and she.
- Both were idolaters, and God first punished them with three years of drouth. God for ther trespacis, as it was weel seyn, 1716  
Afforsheved be trewe prophesie,  
Sente thre yeer nouthen deuh nor reyn  
Vpon the erthe ther greyn to multeplie;  
Till efft ageyn, bi praiser off Helie, 1720  
Holsum watres from heuene gan descende,  
Which gaff hem cause ther cursid liff tamende.
- But Jezebel, an accursed woman, slew 300 prophets, besides Naboth for his vineyard. But his wiff, that cursid Iezabel,  
To ech thyng hatful which that was dyuyne, 1724  
An hundred prophetis she slouh in Israel,  
Onto Baal for thei ne\* wolde enclyne;  
And she also slouh Naboth for his vyne,  
Thoruh whos outrage & fals oppressioun 1728  
Achab was brouht to his confusioun.
- Not long after this, Achab, fatally wounded in his chariot, was deuoured by dogs as Elijah prophesied, Off his enmyes outraied in bataile,  
With a sharp arwe cauht his fatal wounde,  
Till al his blood be bledying dede raile\* 1732  
Aboute his chaar, with many dropis rounde;  
That the woordis wer ful trewe founde  
Off Helias, which told hym, as it stood,  
That hungri houndis sholde likke his blood. 1736
- and Jezebel fell out of a tower. Beware, Princes, of false counsel given by your wives. In a cite, than callid Iezrael,  
Doun from a tour ioynnyng to the wall,  
The said[e] queen, callid Iezabel;  
Was ouercast & hadde a dedli fall. 1740  
Touchyng these myscheuys, for she was cause of all,

1707. his] be H — the] his R.

1710. al] om. R. 1714. may men R.

1715. ydolastres B, ydolatraris R. 1716. ther] his H.

1718. neithir dewe ne R. 1723. that] this R.

1726. ne] nat B, H 5 — wold not R, wolde nat J, would not P.

1731. With] Off R. 1732. raile] fayle B, H, R, J, H 5, R 3,

P, & other MSS. and prints.

1737. In] And in R — than] om. R — bat was callid Ieziael H.

1738. the] a R.



Bewar ye Pryncis, remembryng al your lyues,  
Teschewen fals counsail youen by your wyues.

[Off queene Gatholia for hir tyrannye slayn.]<sup>1</sup>

NEXT to Achab in ordre dede sue  
Gatholia, with doolful contenaunce  
Bochas besechyng, as she thouht it due,\*  
Hir sodeyn fall to putte in remembraunce,  
Sours and cheff roote off sorwe and myschaunce, 1748  
Vsurpacioun and off fals couetise,  
Lik as hir story heeraftir shal deuise.

1744 Athaliah, who  
followed Ahab,

She was vpreised be fauour in thre thynges;  
For fader, brother, and also hir husbonde  
Wer in that tyme echon crownyd kynges,  
With sceptre and suerd, as ye shal vndirstonde,  
Many emprises ther daies took on honde;  
And how Fortune ther hihnesse dede assaile, 1756  
I caste shortli to make rehersaile.

1752 was fortunate  
in that her  
father, brother  
and husband  
were kings;

She fill off Fortune in thunhappi boundis,  
First whan hir fader was with an arwe ded,  
His blood vplikked with cruel hungri houndis,  
A-boute his chaar[e] rennyng down ful red.  
His bodi pale lay, who that took heed,  
Lik a careyn, naked and dispoiled,  
With foul blak erthe myd the feeld isoiled. 1760

1760 but her father  
was slain, and  
his body lay  
like carrion,  
soiled with  
earth in the  
field.

Cause of a-nother onhappi heuynesse  
And off hir dedli desolacioun,  
Was, the peeple felli dede hem dresse  
Off Arabie in ther rebellious  
Ageyn hir husbonde, off entencioun  
To robbe his tresour to ther auantage,  
And his richesse be outraious pillage. 1768

1768 Another cause  
of sorrow to  
her was that  
the people of  
Arabia rebelled  
against her  
husband

1741. this myscheff R. 1742. al] of R.

1744. dede] ther did R.

1745. Athalia P — ful doolful R.

1746. she thouht it due] hym thouhte due B.

1748. sorwe and myschaunce] myscheff & sorowe R.

1752. hir] om. R. 1757. caste] purpose R.

1762. good heed R. 1763. careyn] bareyn R.

1764. foul] ful R, H, full R 3 — myd] in myddis R, amynd

H, R 3, P — isoiled] yspoiled R.

1766. off] om. H. 1767. Was] Was whan R — did felly R.

<sup>1</sup>MS. J. leaf 45 verso.

- and robbed<sup>d</sup> and Summe off his meyne thei puttyn in prisoun — 1772  
 slew his sub- Ther was ageyn hem maked no diffence, —  
 jects. Her Spared nouthur cite, boruh nor toun,  
 husband was infected by the Slouh man and child be sturdi violence.  
 plague and Hir lord infect with sodeyn pestilence, 1776  
 died, Conceyued fulli bi his maladie,  
 There was no geyn but he muste [nedis] deie.
- and the Afftir his deth, most wrechchid and odible,  
 stench of his His body corrupt, his bowelis fell down; 1780  
 body was so Off his careyn the stench was so horrible,  
 awful that no Their infect aboute hym enviroun  
 body would With so gret horroure and putrefaccioun,  
 carry him to That no man myhte abiden nor endure 1784  
 his sepulchre. To brynge his bodi onto sepulture.
- Her third mis- Hir thriddle onhapp, wheroff she was ful fayn  
 fortune was the That Fortune list hir efft assaile,  
 death of her Made hir vncl, kyng Ioram, to be slayn 1788  
 uncle, King With an arwe, as he fledde in bataile.  
 Joram, after She supposyng it gretli sholde auaille,  
 which she Lik a woman most furious and wood,  
 slew all the She off kyng Dauid slouh al the roial blood. 1792  
 blood of David so as to be  
 sole ruler of  
 Judea.
- Hir purpos was to gouerne al the rewm, [p. 110]  
 Alone hirsilff ta dominacioun,  
 To regne in Iuda and Ierusalem,  
 This Gatholia be vsurpacioun. 1796  
 And for that cause in hir entencioun,  
 With mortal suerd she made all tho to fyne  
 That were descendid from Dauid down be lyne.
- Except Joash, Except on Ioas ther leffte non alyue, 1800  
 aged one year, Child off a yeer, sone off kyng Ochosie,  
 none of David's Whom Iosaketh, the story doth descryue,  
 kin were left Off verai pite cauhte a fantasie  
 alive, and The child to saue, that he shal nat deie, 1804  
 Joash's life was saved by  
 Jehosheba, From the malice off Gatholia.  
 And she was wiff to bisshop Ioiada.

1773. made R. 1774. nouthur] neithir R — nor] neithir R.  
 1776. infect] enfectid H, effect R — sodeyn] contagious R.  
 1778. nedis] om. R, J, H 5. 1780. fell] fall H.  
 1783. gret] gre H. 1784. nor] ne R.  
 1786. onhapp] vnhappy R.  
 1794. ta] to haue R.  
 1796. Gotholia R, Gathalia H, Athalia P. 1798. to] om. R.  
 1802. Iosabeth R, P. 1804. shal] shuld R.  
 1806. And] As R.

She and this bisshop, with hool herte & enteer,  
 Kepte this child in ful secre wise  
 Withynne the temple the space off seuene year,  
 And in the seuente, the story doth deuise,  
 Ioiada took on hym this emprise:  
 Yonge Ioas withynne a certeyn day  
 Be iust[e] title to crowne hym yiff he\* may.

wife of Bishop  
 Jehoiada. For  
 1808 seven years  
 they kept  
 young Joash in  
 the temple.  
 Then Jehoiada  
 called a coun-  
 cil and pro-  
 1812 posed to  
 crown Joash  
 king,

His massageris he sendith out anon,  
 Off pryncis, tribunes gan a counseil call,  
 Off preestis eek, and leuytes euerichon.  
 And whan he hadde discurd to hem all  
 Hool his entent, thus it is befall:  
 Sworn and assentid, as it was sitting,  
 That yonge Ioas shal be crownyd kyng.

1816

"For be promys, which that is dyuyne,"  
 Quod Ioiada, "yiff ye taken heede,  
 God hath behestid to Dauid and his lyne,  
 And assurid onto his kynreede,  
 In Ierusalem how thei shal succede;  
 And thouh Ioas be yong & tendre off myht,  
 He to the crowne hath neuer-the-lesse ryht.

1820

as God had  
 promised that  
 David's line  
 should rule in  
 Jerusalem.

1824

In this mateer I wil nat that ye slepe,  
 But to shewe your trewe deligence,  
 On foure parties the temple for to keepe,  
 That no man entre be no violence;  
 And in the myddis, be roial excellence,"  
 Quod this bisshop, "no man shal us lette,  
 On Ioas hed a crowne for to sette."

1828 "No man shall  
 prevent our  
 setting a crown  
 on his head."

1832

And whan ech thyng was brouht onto the poynt,  
 His hih estat tencrece and magnefe,  
 The peepel anon, whan he was enoynt,  
 "Viuat rex!" thei began to crie.  
 And whan Gatholia gan this thyng espie,  
 For veray ire and the sodeyn wonder,  
 Off malencoli hir clothes kitte assonder.

When Joash  
 was anointed,  
 1836 the people cried,  
 "Long live the  
 King!"  
 Athaliah  
 ran to the  
 temple in a  
 fury and bade  
 1840 her men slay  
 the young king.

Ran to the temple and gan make affray  
 With hir meyne, and to crie loude,  
 Bad hem go slen, and make no delay,

1844

1808. secret H. 1813. he] she B, J, R 3, H.  
 1823. and] & to R. 1824. onto] to H. 1830. On] of H.  
 1838. to] for to H. 1839. tespye H.  
 1841. kutte R, cutte H. 1844. go] to H.

The yonge kyng, in al the haste thei coude:  
 Hir venym hid vnder a couert cloude,  
 Al attonys hir purpos to recure,  
 Be sodeyn malice she gan that day discure. 1848

The temple  
 however was  
 well guarded,  
 and she was  
 seized by the  
 centurions and  
 soon afterwards  
 put to death.

The temple kept, entre had she non,  
 Peeple ordeyned awaityng for the nonys;  
 And or\* she myhte any ferthere gon,  
 Clenli armed, the centurionys 1852  
 The cruel queen assailed al attonys.  
 And off hir malice to writen a short tale,  
 Thei slouh hir afftir off Cedron in the vale.

Lo, this is the  
 end of murder  
 and tyranny!  
 Noble Princes,  
 beware of doing  
 wrong to right-  
 ful heirs.

Loo, heer the eende off moordre and tirannye; 1856  
 Loo, heer the eende off vsurpacioun;  
 Loo, heer the eende off fals conspiracye;  
 Loo, heer the eende off fals presumpcioun!  
 Born rihtful heires, wrongli to put hem down. 1860  
 O noble Pryncis, thowh God hath maad you strong,  
 To rihtful heires be war ye do no wrong!

### ¶ Lenvoye.

These tragedies  
 are of princes,  
 warned by God,  
 yet failing to  
 rise from their  
 sins.

**T**HESE tragedies testatis & degrees,  
 Fulli declareth the decepciouns 1864  
 Off Fortunys fals mutabilitoes  
 Shewed in provyncis, citees and eek touns.  
 Pryncis onwarli lost ther posessiouns,  
 Which from ther synnes, in no maner wise, — 1868  
 Hadde off God warnyng, and list nat for to rise.

Mighty kings  
 were cast down  
 unawares from  
 their felicity:  
 Jeroboam for  
 his idolatry and  
 oppression;

Mihti kynges cast down from ther sees,  
 Loste ther lyues and ther regeouns,  
 Onwarli throwe from ther felicitees: 1872  
 Ieroboam for his oppressiouns  
 And for his froward fals oblaciouns  
 Doon to ydoles, his story doth deuise,  
 Had off God warnyng, & list nat for to rise. 1876

1846] *om.* R. 1851. or] *ar* B.

1855. Thei] The R — off] *corrected to on or at H.*

1860. to] *om.* H, R 3.

1863. These tragedies testatis] This tragedie the astatis R —  
 testatis] to estates P.

1865. Fortunys] fortune R.

1869. aryse R.

Achab also hadde gret aduersitees  
 Thoruh fals counsail and exortaciouns  
 Off Iezabel, roote off iniquitees;  
 Dede to his peeples gret extorsiouns:  
 She slouh prophetis, Godis champiouns.  
 Bothe he and she, most cursid in ther guise,  
 Had off God warnyng, & list nat for to rise.

[p. 111] Ahab for his  
 extortions, and  
 his abominable  
 wife Jezebel,  
 who slew all  
 the prophets;

1880

Gathalia with hir duplicitees  
 And conspired fals intrusiouns  
 Slouh Dauides seed, tentre ther dignitees,  
 And to possede ther domynaciouns;  
 But for hir hatful fals collusiouns  
 Onwarly slayn, for hir gret couetise,  
 Had off God warnyng, & list nat for to rise.

1884 Athaliah  
 for murdering  
 David's de-  
 scendants.

1888

Pryncis remembreth in your prosperitees,  
 And seeth afor in your discreciouns,  
 Wrong clymyng up of statis or degrees,  
 Outher be moordre or be fals tresouns,  
 Axeth a fall for ther fynal guerdouns;  
 Namli off them that the Lord despise,  
 And for his warnyng list nat for to rise.

1892 Princes, remem-  
 ber in your  
 prosperity that  
 wrongful usur-  
 pation either by  
 murder or  
 treason invites  
 a fall.

1896

[How Dido queen of Cartage slouh hirsilf for con-  
 seruacion of hir chastite.]<sup>1</sup>

NOW must I putte my reud[e] stile in pres,  
 To queen Dido make my passage:  
 Hir lord Siche was preest to Hercules,  
 Hir fadir Belus, falle into gret age,  
 Kyng off Tیره, and she queen off Cartage.  
 And it is rad in bookis that be trewe,  
 How first in Tیره was founde purpil hewe.

1900 Dido, queen of  
 Carthage, was  
 the wife of  
 Sychæus; her  
 father, Belus,  
 king of Tyre,  
 invented purple.

1904

1877. *This stanza is omitted in R.* 1878. counseiles H.  
 1880. his] hir H. 1884. Athalia R, H, P, Athalya H 5.  
 1885. intrusiouns] entenciouns H.  
 1886. Dauythis R, H — tentre] tencres H.  
 1890. aryse R.  
 1891. in] om. H. 1893. statis or] estatis & R.  
 1894. moordre] word R. 1895. ther] the H.  
 1897. his] no R.  
 1900. Siche] Sicheus H, P.  
 1901. Belus] Bolas R.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 46 verso.

Cadmus in-  
vented the  
alphabet, and  
his brother  
discovered  
the red of  
vermilion.

Cadmus fond first lettres for to write,  
Gaff hem to Grekis, as maad is menciou<sup>n</sup>,  
Whos brother Fenix, as clerkis eek endite,  
Fond first the colour off vermelioun.  
And off Cartage, the famous myhti toun,  
This said[e] Dido, hir story doth expresse,  
How she was bothe queen and founderesse;

1908

Dido's husband,  
Sychæus, was  
slain for his  
riches by her  
brother Pyg-  
malion,

But hir husbonde was cheeff lord and sire,  
Callid Sicheus, ful famous off renoun,  
Off this noble cite named Tire,  
Hadde gret tresour & gret possessioun.  
And for envie kyng Pigmalion,  
Brother to Dido, this Siche slouh in deede,  
Off fals entent his riches to posseede.

1912

1916

and Dido in  
her grief fled  
from Tyre with  
her husband's  
treasure.

Dido this slauhtre took greuou<sup>s</sup>li at herte,  
Sore compleynyng this onhappi chaunce,  
Caste she wolde, yiff she myhte asterte,  
Fleen out off Tire and hirsilff auau<sup>n</sup>ce,  
With al the tresour and the habundaunce  
Behynde lefft whan hir lord was ded,  
Hir shippis entryng, went away for dreed.

1920

1924

Knowing the  
avarice of  
Pygmalion,

She knew & dradde the gredi auarice  
Off hir brother, kyng Pigmalion,  
And how that hatful onstau<sup>n</sup>chable vice  
Was ground and roote & cheeff occasioun  
Whi that hir lord was slay[e]n in that toun.  
For whom ful offte she cried welaway,  
Whos deth was cause whi she fledde away.

1928

1932

she felt certain  
that if she re-  
mained he  
would try to  
injure her.

She hadde also this opynyoun,  
Which caused most hir hertli heuynesse,  
That sithe hir brothir, kyng Pigmalion,  
Hadde slayn hir lord for his gret richesse,  
Yiff she abod, that he wolde hym dresse,  
Parcel for malice, parcel for couetise,  
To haue hir tresour sum tresoun to practise.

1936

1910. hir] the R.

1914. named] callid J, was callid H.

1919. greuou<sup>s</sup>li] gretly R. 1920. this] his R.

1923. and] & al R. 1924. whan] whanne whan R.

1928. onstau<sup>n</sup>chable] vnstable R, vnchaungeable H.

1932. whi] whi þat R.

1935. sithe] sih R.



And for teshewe his malice and tresoun,  
 For hir nauye she maketh ordenaunce  
 Bauys off them, in whom, as be resoun,  
 She sholde off riht sette hir affiaunce.  
 And thei ful redy hir to do plesaunce,  
 Be on assent, for nothyng wolde faile,  
 With faire Dido out off that lond to saile.

1940 So on the ad-  
 vice of her  
 nobles she  
 sailed away  
 from Tyre,

1944

In Cipre first was hir arryuaile;  
 And ther she fond[e] be a ryuer side,  
 Off yong[e] maidnes, with ful riche apparaile,  
 Sexti and ten in the same tide,  
 Which in the temple off Venus dede abide,  
 Afftir the custom, as I can reporte,  
 Off Cipriens straungeris to disporte.

1948 and first ar-  
 rived in Cy-  
 prus, where she  
 found seventy  
 maidens, priest-  
 esses of the  
 temple

1952

And in ther moste feithful humble wise,  
 Afftir the rihtis off Cipre the cuntre,  
 Onto Venus ech day do sacrefise,  
 Them to conserue in ther virgenyte,  
 Duryng ther liff to lyue in chastite,  
 Neuer to been ioyned in mariage;  
 And with queen Dido thei went\* to Cartage.

1956 of Venus,  
 vowed to  
 chastity, who  
 accompanied  
 her to Car-  
 thage.

1960

In ther passage fill a gret meracle,  
 As Seruyus maketh mencion;  
 For Dido took off Iuno this oracle,  
 Outher baperyng or bi auisioun\*,  
 Off Cartage to beelde that myhti toun.  
 And at reuerence off that gret goddessse,  
 She to tho parties faste gan hir dresse,

[p. 112] When Carthage  
 was founded  
 a great miracle  
 occurred, as  
 Servius tells:

1964

The said[e] cite statli for to founde.  
 And hir werkmen, as thei therthe souhte,  
 An oxes hed off auenture thei founde;  
 And to queen Dido anon the hed thei brouhte,  
 Menyng wheroff to serchyn out she\* thouhte.  
 And hir clerkis in ther dyuynaile,  
 Tolde it was tokne off seruage & trauaile.

1968 Dido's work-  
 men unearthed  
 the head of  
 an ox while  
 digging, and  
 her wise men  
 told her that  
 it was a token  
 of servitude.

1972

1942. Bauys] Be a devis R. 1944. hir] for R.

1954. in ther] the H. 1958. ther] the R.

1960. went] wenten B, R, J — to] vn to H.

1962. maketh] make R.

1964. bi apperyng J, R, H, P, R 3, H 5 — or] outhir H, H 5 —  
 auisioun] dyuysion R, aduisioun J, P, a vision R 3 — or bi  
 auisioun] outhir bauysion B.

1971. anon the hed] the hed anon R, H, H 5.

1972. Menyng] Mevyng R — she] thei B, J.

For which she lefte to beeldyn [in] that place,  
 And gan remeue, as she ouhte off riht; 1976  
 And fro then[ne]s but a litil space  
 A soil she fond ful delectable off siht;  
 And as hir werkmen with ther ful[le] myht  
 The ground gan serche, anon, or thei took heed, 1980  
 The stori tellith, thei fond an horsis hed.

So she began  
 to dig elsewhere  
 and found a  
 horse's head,  
 which was a  
 good omen.  
 And there she  
 built Carthage.

And bi expownyng off hir dyuynours,  
 Fond [that] this beeste gretli myhte auaie  
 Onto pryncis & myhti conquerours, 1984  
 Necessarie\* in werre and in bataile.  
 And for no wiht hir noblesse sholde assaile,  
 Cartage she bilte, off so gret excellence,  
 Geyn all enmyes to stonden at diffence. 1988

Some books say  
 that she pur-  
 chased as much  
 land as could  
 be surrounded  
 by an ox's skin,

Summe bookis declare and specefie,  
 Dido dede as moche lond purchase  
 As a skyn in round myhte ocupie  
 Off an oxe, theron to beelde a place; 1992  
 The ground cumpasid took a large space,  
 Which strongli bilt, thus it is befall,  
 Afftir the skyn men dede it Birsas call.

and when the  
 city was walled  
 it took the  
 names Carthage  
 and Birsas after  
 the skin.

And whan this cite myhtili was wallid,  
 Afftir a skyn, wrouht be good curray, 1996  
 The name take, Carta it was callid, —  
 Lethir off Birsas, pleynli this no nay,  
 Took eek his name duryng many a day, — 2000  
 Carta and Birsas knet in ther language,  
 As moch to seyne as this woord Cartage.

It stands in  
 Africa and was  
 built in honour  
 of Iuno, in the  
 time of David.

And in Affrik stant the teritorie  
 Wher she bilte this cite delectable, 2004  
 Founded it in laude and in memorie  
 Off myhti Iuno, the goddesses honourable,  
 The cite wallid, with tour[es] strong & stable,

1975. in] *om.* H, R 3, J, H 5.

1977. but] *om.* H. 1978. delitable R.

1981. horsis] horse H, R 3, P, hors J, H 5.

1983. that] *om.* J, H, P, H 5, R 3 — Fond] & H.

1985. Necessaire B. 1988. Ageyn R.

1993. ful large R. 1994. bilt] belte R 3, bylded P.

1997. curray] coraie R, Corray H.

1999. pleynli this no nay] this is no way R.

2000. a] *om.* R. 2004. delitable R.

2005. 2nd in] *om.* H.

2007. The] This R.

Tyme off kyng Daudid myd the fourte age,  
As I seide erst, callid it Cartage.

2008

With gret worshepe she regned in that toun,  
Euer off purpos to lyue in chastite;  
And round aboute floured the renoun  
Off hir prudence and hir honeste.  
Til the report off hir famous beute  
Cam to the eris, which gladli wil nat hide,  
Off a kyng that duellid ther beside.

2012

Dido reigned in  
great prosperity  
until a neigh-  
bouring king  
heard of her  
beauty

2016

Off Musitan[e]s he was lord and sire,  
As poetis pleynli list descryue,  
Which in his herte gretli gan desire  
The queen Dido bi hir assent to wyue,  
Onto hir grace yiff he myhte aryue.  
But for she hadde auowed chastite,  
She neuer caste married for to be.

2020

and wanted to  
have her for  
his wife, al-  
though she had  
vowed never  
again to marry.

The kyng supprised with loue in his corage  
For hir wisdam and hir gret beute,  
Sent[e] for the pryncis off Cartage,  
On this mater to han a gret trete,  
To condescende, yiff it myhte be,  
Lich his desir, in al ther beste entent,  
Doon ther deuer to make hir to consent.

2024

He sent for the  
princes of Car-  
thage to treat  
of a marriage

2028

With his request he gan hem eek manace,  
Yiff he failed off his entencioun,  
Lik his desir to stonden in hir grace,  
Saide he wolde been enmy to ther toun,  
Tordeyne be force for ther destruccioun.  
Nat fulli sobre, nor fulli in a rage,  
This was to hem pleynli his language.

2032

and threatened  
to use force if  
he failed in his  
purpose.

2036

But for thei knew hir gret[e] stedfastnesse,  
And hir herte veray immutable,  
Thei were affer[e]d any woord texprese,  
Lest ther answeere wer nat acceptable  
To his hihnesse, for he was nat tretable.  
Eek in ther conceit thei gan also recorde,  
To his desir the queen wold nat accorde.

2040

The princes of  
Carthage knew  
that Dido  
would never  
break her vow,

2044

2009. it] is R, H.

2017. Musicans H, R 3. 2020. The] To R.

2026. off] of al R. 2031. eek] om. R.

2033. stoden R. 2034. he] that he R — ther] the R.

2035. be force] repeated in R — for] to H, R 3.

2039. immutable R, H. 2042. he was] thei wern R.

so they tem-  
porised.  
Dido remained  
fixed in her  
purpose

With good auys an answer thei purueie  
To his purpos in parti fauorable,  
Afferd he wolde ther noble toun werreie,  
Or off disdeyn vpon hem be vengable.  
But queen Dido, in hir entent ay stable,  
Caste she wolde, what-euer thei hir tolde,  
Hir chast auow feithfulli to holde.

[p. 113]

2048

and told her  
princes

She set a-side off this cruel kyng  
His fell manacis & his woordis grete;  
And to hir pryncis for ther consentyng,  
Which stood in feer off that he dede hem threte,  
She onto hem gaff a maner hete,  
For thei wer bold tatempten or tattame  
To trete off mater reboundyng to hir shame.

2052

2056

that she would  
rather die than  
grant the king's  
demand.

"Nay, rather deie," quod she, "than tassente  
To his desirs, which thyng God forbeede,  
Or fro the centre off my chast entente  
For to remeue, outhir in thouht or deede, —  
Which were disclaundre to al womanheede,  
To condescende for any manacyng  
To breke my vow for plesaunce off a kyng.

2060

2064

"Be sure, he  
will fail in  
spite of his  
threats.

Touchyng manacis maad to this cite,  
For to destroie it with his gret[e] myht,  
Withoute cause or title off equite  
To grounden hym a quarell ageyn riht,  
Onli for he is blyndid in his siht  
With froward lust my chast auow tassaile,  
Beth riht weel seur how he theroff shal faile.

2068

2072

"If you were  
men, you  
would not con-  
descend to treat  
with him.

Yiff ye wer bold and manli off corage,  
For comoun profit your cite to defende,  
And to withstonde his vicious outrage,  
To trete with hym ye wold nat condescende.  
But myn entent, platli to comprehende,  
Wher\* it to you be ioie or displeaunce,  
In my promys shal be no variaunce.

2076

2057. tattame] attame H. 2058. rebowndith H.

2060. his] hir R.

2061. centre] contre H, tentre J, P; in B the c in centre is very much like a t.

2066. manacyng R. 2067. with] thoruh R — gret] om. R.

2070. blynde R. 2072. how] om. R.

2075. his] your R.

2078. Wher] Whethir B, H, J, P, R 3 — it] it be J, P — be] om. R.

My lord Sicheus, the which, alas, is ded  
Onto the world[e], who[-so] list aduerte;  
Trustith riht weel, for manacyng nor dreed,  
That he shal neuer deien in myn herte,  
Nor ye shal neuer myn auow peruerte,  
Thus auysed, whil that I stonde fre,  
Queen off Cartage to gouerne this cite.

Myn hasti answere, I pray you nat disdeyne,  
But that ye list to gyue me liberte,  
With your support that I may atteyne  
To haue a space graunted onto me:  
This to meene, the space off monthes thre,  
Mi lordis will taccompliss\* off entent,  
Which he whilom made in his testament."

Vnder colour to hir auauntage  
She took this space, bookis specefie,  
That she myhte hir cite off Cartage  
The mene while strongli fortefie  
Ageyn hir enmyes, that for no slogardrie  
Off them that wolde hir hih estat confounde,  
Onpurueied hir cite nat be\* founde.

Whan thre monthes passed were & gon,  
She afftir wolde, for hir hertli plesaunce,  
With sundri rihtes, many mo than on,  
To all hir goddis doon sum obseruaunce,  
For a special synguler remembraunce  
Off hym that was, as folk shal vnderstonde,  
Whilom hir lord & best beloued husbonde.

And mor texalte his glorie\* & his honour,  
Heeld his exequies, be due reuerence,  
Off al Cartage in the hiest tour,  
With brennyng fir, fumys and encence,  
Hir pryncis all beyng in presence;  
To which she gan declare, in compleynyng,  
Hir dedli sorwe, doun from hir tour lokyng.

2080 "For my part,  
I will keep my  
promise whether  
it please you or  
not, so long as  
I am Queen of  
Carthage.

2084

2088 "Give me three  
months in  
which to exe-  
cute my hus-  
band's testa-  
ment."

2092

In the mean-  
time she for-  
tified her city.

2096

2100

After the three  
months had  
passed, she did  
observance to  
the gods

2104

2108 and held the  
funeral rites of  
her husband  
with fire and in-  
cense in the high-  
est tower and  
bade farewell to  
her friends,  
2112 praying them to  
report after her  
death, that Dido  
was married but  
once.

2080. the] *om.* R. 2081. who so] who H, J, P, H 5, R 3.

2084. myn auow] my vowe R. 2088. list] lust R.

2092. taccomplisschen B. 2093. whilom] sumtyme R.

2098. that] *om.* R — slugardie R, slugardye H.

2099. hih] *om.* R. 2100. be] ne B, H, R, H 5.

2101. thre] the R. 2107. Whilom] Sumtyme R.

2108. 1st his] hir B, P and MSS. except H 5 — gloire B —  
2nd his] *om.* R, R 3, hir H, her P.

- "Farweel my freendis, farweel for euermore!  
 Onto my lord myn husbonde I mut gon, 2116  
 To hym, I meene, that was my lord off yore:  
 For off husbondis, God wot, I ha[ue] but on;  
 Praieng you to reporte euerichon  
 Afftir my deth, [how] Dido off Cartage 2120  
 I-ioyned was but onys in mariage.
- "Go tell the king that I am  
 dead; his threats are in  
 vain. Seith to the kyng, which hath\* you manacid,  
 Mi chast[e] beute that he wolde assaile, —  
 Go, tellith hym how that I am pacid, 2124  
 And off his purpos how that he shal faile.  
 His manacyng shal hym nat auaille.  
 And seith how Dido deied for the nonys,  
 For she nat wolde be weddid mor than onys. 2128
- "Let him go elsewhere  
 and choose another." Leuere I haue my liff as now to lese, [p. 114]  
 Rathere than soile my widwes chastite.  
 Lat hym go ferthere, sum other for to chese;  
 For in such cas he shal nat speede off me. 2132  
 And with the tresour off myn honeste,  
 Which I ha[ue] treuli obserued al my lyue,  
 I will departe out off this world now blyue."
- And with that she plunged a  
 knife into her heart and ran  
 into the fire. And into fir, that brente cleer and briht, 2136  
 She ran in haste, there is no mor to seyne,  
 Sauff with a knyff in euery manys siht  
 Ful sodenli she roff hir herte on tweyne.  
 Whos pitous deth the cite gan compleyne, 2140  
 Sore wepyng for wonder and for routhe,  
 In a woman to fynde so gret a trouthe.
- After her death they worshipped  
 her as a goddess of chastity,  
 and all widows wept for her  
 sake. Afftir hir deth thei dede ther besynesne  
 To holde and halwe a feste funerall;  
 Worsheped hir lik a chast goddesse, 2144  
 And hir comendyn[g] in especiall  
 To heuenli goddis, & goddis infernall.  
 And widwes all[e], in ther clothes blake, 2148  
 At this feste weptyn for hir sake.

2120. how] *om.* J, P, R 3, H 5.2122. hath] that B, *om.* J. 2124. Go] And R.

2131. ferthere] forth R.

2132. Speede] be speedd H.

2135. will] wolde R — out departe R.

2136. fir] be fire H.

2139. on] in R. 2142. a] *om.* R.

2147. infernall] fernall R.



Touchyng Dido lat ther be no striff:  
Thpuh that she be accusid off Ouide,  
Afftir Bochas I wrot hir chast[e] liff,  
And the contrary I ha[ue] set a-side;  
For me thouhte it was bet tabide  
On hir goodnesse, than thyng reherse in deede,  
Which myhte resowne ageyn hir womanheede.

It is true that  
Ovid accuses  
Dido of mis-  
conducting her-  
self with  
Æneas, but I  
follow Bochas  
and write of  
her chaste life  
only.

To Eneas thouh she was fauourable,  
To Ytaile makyng his passage,  
Al that she dede, [it] was comendable,  
Hym to receyue comyng be Cartage;  
Thouh sum folk wern large off ther language,  
Amysse texpowne be report, or texpresse  
Thyng doon to hym onli off gentilesse.

It seems to me  
that it is better  
to speak of her  
goodness than  
of her failings,  
and besides she  
did nothing but  
what was  
praiseworthy.  
It is always  
better to speak  
well than evil  
of people.

Ther shal for me be maad no rehersaile  
But as I fynde wretyn in Bochas;  
For to sey weel may moch[e] more auaille  
Than froward speche, in many dyuers cas.  
But al Cartage offte seide alas,  
Hir deth compleynyng thoruhout ther cite,  
Which slouh hirselff tobserue hir chastite.

## [¶ Lenvoy.]

**O** FAIR[E] Dido, most stable in thi constaunce,  
Queen of Cartage, merour off hih noblesse,  
Regnyng in glorie\* & vertuous habundaunce,  
Callid in thi tyme cheeff sours off gentilesse,  
In whom was neuer founde doubilnesse,  
Ay off on herte; and so thou dedest fyne,  
With liht off trouthe alle widwes tenlumyne.

Fair Dido,  
mirror of high  
noblesse, you  
died illumining  
all widows with  
the light of  
virtue.

Chast and onchaungid in thi perseueraunce,  
And inmutable founde in thi goodnesse,  
Which neuer thouhtest vpon variaunce,  
Force and prudence wardeyns off thi fairnesse,  
I ha[ue] no language thi vertues to expresse,  
Be newe report so cleerli thei [do] shyne;  
With liht off trouthe alle widwes tenlumyne.

2176

Chaste and  
steadfast in  
your persever-  
ance, your  
goodness was  
immutable.

2180

2184

2151. that] *om.* H. 2152. wryte R, write H.2159. it] *om.* J. 2162. report] record H. 2173. gloire B.

2179. immutable R, H, J.

2183. thei] to H — do] *om.* J, P, H 5, R 3.

Lode-star of  
good behaviour,  
bridling your  
youth with  
soberness,

O lode-sterre off al good gouernaunce,  
All vicious lustis be wisdam to represse;  
Thi grene youth flouryng with al plesaunce,  
Thou di[d]st it bridle with vertuuous sobirnesse. 2188

and finally  
dying out of  
innocent purity  
lest your  
sureness were  
jeopardised!

Diane demened so chastli thi clennesses,  
Whil thou wer soul[e], pley[n]li to termyne,  
With liht off trouthe alle widwes tenlumyne.

Thi famous bounte to put in remembraunce, 2192

Thou slouh thiselff off innocent peurnesse,  
Lest thi seurnesse wer hangid in ballaunce,  
Off such as cast them thi chastite toppresse —  
Deth was inouh to bere theroff witenesse — 2196  
Causyng thi beute to al\* clennesses tenclayne,  
With liht off vertu alle widwes tenlumyne.

¶ Lenvoye direct to wydowis of the translatour.<sup>1</sup>

Noble matrons,  
be sure that no  
such folly as  
that of Dido  
enter your  
hearts.

NOBLE matrones, which han al suffisaunce  
Off womanhed, your wittis doth vp dresse, 2200

How that Fortune list to turne hir chaunce,  
Beth nat to rakell off sodeyn hastynesse,  
But ay provideth\* in your stabilnesse,  
That no such foly entre your corage 2204  
To folwe Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

To slay your-  
selves were too  
great a penance!  
May God bless  
and preserve  
your frailty!

With hir maneris hath non aqueyntaunce, [p. 115]

Put out off mynde such foltissh wilfulnessse: 2208

To slen yoursilff[e] wer a gret penaunce!  
God off his grace defende you and blesse,  
And preserue your variant brotilnesse,  
That your trouthe falle in non outrage,  
To folwe Dido, that was queen off Cartage! 2212

Pretend all  
things that  
make for stead-  
fastness, but  
don't follow  
Dido's example.

With couert colour and sobre contenaunce,  
Off feithful menyng pretendith a liknesse,  
Countirfetith in speche and daliaunce  
Alle thynges that sowneth unto\* stedfastnesse; 2216

2188. Thou] Thi R — didst] dist J, did R 3, dost P.

2189. demened] demede R. 2193. peurnesse H.

2197. to al] tal B. 2198. vertu] trewth R.

2201. to] om. H.

2203. preuideth B, J, provyd R 3, provide P.

2206. non] nouht R. 2210. brotilnesse] Doublesnesse R.

2213. The first line of the following stanza is misplaced before 2213 in H.

2216. unto] into B, R, J, P, H 5.

<sup>1</sup> The same heading is in MS. J. leaf 47 d.

Off prudence be gret auisenesse\*  
 Yoursilff restreyneth, yong & old off age,  
 To folwe Dido, that was queen off Cartage.  
 Lat al your port be void off displesaunce;  
 To gete freendis doth your besynesse,  
 And beth neuer withoute purueiaunce:  
 So shal ye best encresen in richesse, —  
 In on alone may be no sekirnesse;  
 To your herte beth dyuers off language,  
 Contraire to Dido, that was queen off Cartage.  
 Hold your seruauantis vnder obeisaunce,  
 Lat hem nouthur ha[ue] fredam nor largesse,  
 But vnder daunger doon ther obseruaunce.  
 Dauntith ther pride, them bridlyng with lownesse,  
 And whan the serpent off newfangilnesse  
 Assailith you, doth your auauantage, —  
 Contraire to Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

2220 Never be un-  
 provided with  
 fowers; there is  
 no certainty in  
 one alone.

2224

2228 Hold a tight  
 rein and bridle  
 them with hu-  
 mility, and  
 when the ser-  
 pent of incon-  
 stancy assails  
 you, be very  
 different from  
 2232 Dido, who  
 was queen of  
 Carthage.

[How vicious Sardanapalle kyng of Assirie brent  
 himsilff and his tresour.]<sup>1</sup>

OFF Assirie to rekne kynges alle  
 Which hadde that lond vnder subieccioun,  
 Last off echon was Sardanapalle,  
 Most femynyne off condicioun,  
 Wherefore Fortune hath hym throwe doun:  
 And compleynyng, most ougli off maneere,  
 Next aftir Dido to Bochas dede appeere.  
 To vicious lust his liff he dede enclyne;  
 Mong Assiriens, whan he his regne gan,  
 Off fals vsage he was so femynyne,  
 That among women vppon the rokke he span,  
 In ther habite disguisid from a man.  
 And off froward flesschli insolence,  
 Off alle men he fledde the presence.  
 First this kyng ches to been his guide  
 Moodir off vices, callid idilnesse,  
 Which off custum ech vertu set aside

2236 Sardanapalus,  
 the last king of  
 Assyria, came  
 complaining in  
 an ugly manner  
 to Bochas.

2240

2244 He was vicious  
 all his life, and  
 so effeminate  
 that he span  
 amongst women  
 and fled  
 the presence of  
 all men.

2248 His guide was  
 idleness, the  
 mother of vices,  
 and that is  
 why he fell.

2217. auesinesse B.

2221. gete] get yow R.

2225. hertis R.

2227. Holdith R.

2232. doth] do H.

2234. rekne] regne R.

2242. Amonge R — beganne R.

2250. ech] his R — set] settith H, R 3.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 48 recto.

In ech acourt wher she is maistresse.  
 Off sorwe & myscheeff the firste founderesse, 2252  
 Which causid onli this Sardanapall,  
 That to al goodnesse his wittis dede appall.

He invented  
 drunkenness  
 and riot and  
 feather beds,  
 and was a  
 libertine and  
 glutton.

He fond up first ryot and drunk[e]nesse,  
 Callid a fadir off lust and lecherie; 2256  
 Hatful off herte he was to sobirnesse,  
 Cherishyng surfetis, wach and glotonye,  
 Callid in his tyme a prynce off baudrie,  
 Fond rere soperis\* and fether beddis soffte, 2260  
 Drynke late, and chaunge his wyne offte.

He loved the  
 odour of food  
 and of dirty  
 cooks, of spits,  
 ladles, and  
 meat hooks,  
 and kept com-  
 pany with  
 drunken folk.

The air off metis and off baudi cookis,  
 Which off custum alday roste and seede,  
 Sauour off spetis, ladlis & flesshookis 2264  
 He loued weel, and took off hem gret heede.  
 And folk that drank[e] mor than it was neede,  
 Smellyng off wyn for ther gret excesse,  
 With hem tabide was hooli his gladnesse. 2268

He liked to  
 have butchers  
 and fishermen  
 about him,  
 their coats  
 powdered with  
 silver-bright  
 scales,

He thouhte also that it dede hym good  
 To haue aboute hym, ageyn\* skele and riht,  
 Boistous bocheris, al bespreynt with blood,  
 And watry fissheris abood euer in his siht, 2272  
 Ther kootis poudrid with scales siluer-briht:  
 Dempte ther odour, duryng al his liff,  
 Was to his corage best preseruatiiff.

and nothing  
 was so  
 pleasant to him  
 as a bawdy  
 house and lust-  
 ful, foul-  
 mouthed people,  
 who could  
 flatter him.

For ther nas herbe, spice, gras ne roote 2276  
 To hym so lusti, as was the bordelhaus,  
 Nor gardeyn non so holsum nor so soote  
 To his plesaunce nor so delicious,  
 As the presence off folkis lecherous; 2280  
 And euer glad to speke off ribaudie,  
 And folk cherisshe that koude flatre & lie.

Finally God  
 became dis-  
 pleased with his  
 scandalous be-  
 haviour,

Til at the laste God off veray riht  
 Displesid was with his condiciouns, 2284  
 Because he was in euery manys siht

2252. firste] cheff H, om. R 3. 2254. That] om. H, R 3.  
 2260. reresoperis B, reresopirs R, reresopers J, rersuppers R 3,  
 reresowpers P.  
 2263. alday] ech day H.  
 2264. spitis ladil & Fleishokes R. 2265. gret] goode R.  
 2267. ther] the H. 2269. R omits lines 2269-4102.  
 2270. ageyn] with B, J.  
 2276. herbe] eke H — ne] nor H. 2277. as] a H.

So femynyne in his affeccions,  
 And hooli gaff his inclynacions  
 Duryng his liff to eueri vicious thyng,  
 Terrible to heere, a[nd] namli off a kyng.

2288

But, as Bochas list to putte in mynde,  
 Whan Arbachus, a prynce off gret renoun,  
 Sauh off this kyng the flessfli lustis blynde,  
 Made with the peeples off that regeoun  
 Ageyn[e]s hym a coniuracioun,  
 And to hym sente, for his mys-gouernaunce,  
 Off hih disdeyn a ful pleyn diffiaunce.

[p. 116] and, as Bochas  
 says, Arbaces,  
 who saw his  
 blind sensuality,  
 2292 conspired  
 against him,

Bad hym be war, & proudli to hym tolde,  
 That he hym caste his vicious liff tassaile,  
 And in al haste, also, that he wolde  
 Withynne a feeld[e] meete hym in bataile.  
 Wheroff astonyd, his herte gan to faile,  
 Wher among women he sat & made gaudes,  
 No wiht aboute but flatereres and baudes.

2296

bidding him  
 beware and  
 challenging him  
 to battle.

And vp he ros, & gan hymself auauunce,  
 No stuff aboute hym but sergauntis riotous;  
 Took the feeld withoute gouernaunce,  
 No men off armys but folkis\* vicious,  
 Whos aduersarie,\* callid Arbachus,  
 Made hym proudli the feeld to forsake,  
 That lik a coward his castell he hath take.

2300

2304 Sardanapalus,  
 surrounded by  
 women and  
 flatterers, lost  
 heart, but  
 made a show of  
 resistance and  
 then, like a  
 2308 coward, fled  
 to his castle,

And for his herte frowardli gan faile,  
 Nat\* lik a knyht, but lik a losengour,  
 His riche perre, his roial appaile,  
 His gold, his ieweles, vesseles & tresour  
 Was brouht afor hym down [out] off a tour,  
 Mid off his paleis, & gaff his men in charge  
 Off cole and fagot to make a fir ful large.

2312 where he hade  
 all his jewels  
 and gold and  
 royal garments  
 be brought  
 to him, and,

In which he caste his tresour and ieweles,  
 Mor bestial than lik a manli man;  
 And myd his riche stonys and vesseles,  
 Into the fir furiousli he ran.  
 This tryumphe Sardanapallus wan,  
 With fir consumyd for his fynal meede,  
 Brent al to ashes among the coles rede.

2316

2320 having a large  
 fire kindled,  
 cast everything  
 into it, and  
 running  
 furiously into  
 the flames, was  
 himself burnt  
 to ashes.

2324

2303. aboute] about hym H. 2305. sargeaunter H.

2307. folkis] off folkis B, J, H, P, R 3, H 5.

2308. aduersaire B.

2312. Nat.] I nat B, H 5. 2315. out] om. J, H, H 5, P.

Before his death  
he wrote his  
epitaph: "My  
idleness and  
vicious life  
brought me to  
my end."

From this,  
Princes, you  
may see that  
vengeance al-  
ways follows  
vices.

To for his deth[e] bad men sholde write  
Vpon his graue, the book doth certefie,  
With lettres large, this resoun for tendite:  
"Mi cursid liff, my froward glotenye,  
Myn idilnesse, myn hatful lecherye,  
Han causid me, with many fals desir,  
My laste daies to be consumpt with fir."

2328

This epitaffe on his graue he sette,  
To shewe how he was in al his lyue  
Besi euer to hyndren and to lette  
Al maner vertu, & therageyn to stryue.  
Who folweth his tras is neuer lik to thryue,  
For which, ye Pryncis, seeth for your auail,  
Vengeance ay folweth vices at the tail.

2332

2336

¶ A comendacion of Bochas of vertuous besines  
rehering names fondours of diuers sciencis &  
cunnyngis in prefe of Idilnes.<sup>1</sup>

There were  
others also who  
delighted to live  
in bestial  
fashion,

THER wer eek other, þat list falsli provide  
Fals flesschli lustis & dissoluciouns,  
Riot, outrage, froward disdeyn & pride,  
Vices tenhaunce in ther affeccions  
With many onleffful croked condicions,  
Resoun auoidyng, as I reherse shall,  
Themsilff delityng for to be bestiall.

2340

2344

for people may  
be divided into  
two kinds: the  
virtuous and  
the vicious, and  
the reputation  
of both is such  
as they deserve.

Tweyne maner folkis to putte in remembraunce,  
Off vice and vertu, and sette a difference:  
The goode alway han set ther plesaunce  
In vertuous labour to doon ther deligence;  
And vicious peeple in slouthe & negligence.  
And the report off bothen is reserued,  
With laude or lak, as thei han disserued.

2348

2352

One must  
praise the  
industrious and  
censure the  
idle. So I will  
call to mind  
some virtuous  
folk and com-  
pare them with  
Sardanapalus.

Men muste off riht the vertuous preferre,  
And treuli preise labour and besynesse;  
And ageynward, dispreisen folk that erre,  
Which ha[ue] no ioie but in idilnesse.  
And to compare bamaner off witnesse,  
Vertuous folk I will to mynde call  
In rebukyng off kyng Sardanapall.

2356

2330. Han] have H. 2332. Epitaphye H, Epitaphie P.

2335. ther ageyn to] therageyns H.

2352. have H. 2353. preferre] preserve H.

<sup>1</sup> The same heading is in MS. J. leaf 48 verso.



- The olde wise, callid Pictagoras,  
 Be soun off hameris, auctours certefie,  
 Example took[e], and cheeff maister was  
 That fond out first musik and melodie.  
 Yit off Tubal summe bookis specefie,  
 That he be strok of smethis where thei stood,  
 Fond first out musik tofor Noes flood.
- And Iosephus remembreth be scripture,  
 That this Tubal koude forge weel,  
 First ymagyned makying off armure  
 With instrumentis off iren and off steel,  
 And ther temprures he fond out euerideel.  
 Lucyus Tarquyn, in stori as I fynde,  
 Fond cheynes first, folk to fetryn & bynde.
- The childre off Seth, in story ye mai see,  
 Flouryng in vertu be long successiouns,  
 For to profite to ther posterite,  
 Fond first the crafft off heuenli mociousns,  
 Off sondri sterris the reuoluciouns;  
 Bequath ther cunnyng, off gret auauntage,  
 To them that afftir cam off ther lynage.
- For ther vertu God gaff hem gret cunnyng,  
 Touchyng natures bothe off erthe & heuene,  
 And it remembrid sothli be writyng,  
 To lasten ay for water or for leuene.  
 Generaciouns ther wer off hem seuene,  
 Which for vertu, withoute werre or striff,  
 Trauailed in cunnyng duryng al ther liff.
- And for that Adam dede prophesie,  
 Twies the world destroyed sholde be,  
 With water onys stonde in iupartie,  
 Next with fir, which no man myht[e] fle:  
 But Sethis childre, as thei\* dede see,  
 Made too peleris wher men myhte graue,  
 Fro fir & watir the carectis for to saue.
- The ton was maad off tilis hard ibake,  
 Fro touch off fir to saue the scripture;  
 Off hard marbil thei dede a-nother make,  
 Ageyn[es] water strongli to endure,
- 2360 Pythagoras or  
 Tubal invented  
 music from the  
 rhythm of beat-  
 ing hammers.
- 2364
- [p. 117] Tubal first in-  
 vented forged  
 2368 armour and  
 Lucius Tarquin  
 chains.
- 2372
- The children of  
 Seth were the  
 first astrono-  
 mers,  
 2376
- 2380
- seven genera-  
 tions of them,  
 who laboured in  
 peace all their  
 lives.  
 2384
- 2388 And they made  
 two pillars, one  
 of tiles, the  
 other of hard  
 marble, upon  
 which letters  
 were engraved  
 2392 to save them  
 from destruction  
 by water and  
 fire.
- 2396

2371. temprures] themprures H. 2373. fettre H.  
 2379. off] so H, for H 5, or P. 2383. it] it is H.  
 2392. as thei] al this B, J, P, R 3. 2393. graue] save H.

They thought  
that their  
knowledge  
would be in  
vain were it  
not passed on  
to other men.

To saue off lettris the preent & the figure:  
For ther cunnyng afforn gan so prouide,  
Geyn fir & watir perpetueli tabide.

2400

Thei dempte ther cunnyng hadde be in veyn,  
But folk with them hadde be partable;  
And for ther labour sholde afftirward be seyn,  
Thei it remembrid be writyng ful notable:  
Onto-for God a thyng ful comendable,  
To them that folwe, be scripture or writyng  
Or that men deie departe ther cunnyng.

2404

2408

In old times  
various crafts  
were found for  
the encourage-  
ment of virtue  
and the avoid-  
ance of idleness.

For be old tyme folk dyuers crafftis founde  
In sundri wise for ocupacioun;  
Vertu to cherisshe, vices to confounde,  
Ther witt thei sette & ther entencioun  
To putte ther labour in execucioun,  
And to outrage, this is veray trouthe,  
Fro manyis liff necligence & slouthe.

2412

Enoch invented  
the Hebrew  
alphabet, and  
after Noah's  
Flood, Cam  
invented  
it again,

Olde Ennok, ful famous off vertu,  
Duryng that age fond first off euerichon  
Thoruh his prudence lettres off Hebreu;  
And in a piler thei wer kept off ston,  
Til that the flood off Noe was agon.  
And afftir hym, Cam was the secounde  
Bi whom off Hebreu lettres wer first founde.

2416

2420

and so did  
Catacrismus.  
But the letters  
written by  
God's hand and  
given to Moses  
were different.

And Catacrismus the firste was that fond  
Lettres also, as off that language.  
But lettres wreten with Godis owne hond  
Moyses first took, most briht off his visage,  
Vpon Syna as he heeld his passage,  
Which off carectis & namys in sentence  
From other writyng hadde a difference.

2424

2428

Afterwards  
Ezra became  
the fourth dis-  
coverer of He-  
brew letters,  
and Abraham  
invented those  
of Syria and  
Chaldea.

Eek afftirward, as other bookis tell,  
And Seyn[t] Ierom rehersith in his stile,  
Vnder thempire off Zorobabell,  
Esdras off Hebreu gan lettres first compile;  
And Abraham, gon sithen\* a gret while,  
The firste was, in bookis men may see,  
That fond lettres off Cire & off Caldee.

2432

2436

2399. 2nd the] *om.* H. 2413. in] & H. 2415. Fro] For J.  
2421. Caame H, Cam J, R 3, P. 2431. seyn J.  
2433. first] *om.* H, R 3.  
2434. gon] gan J — gon sithen] gan sithe B.

Ysis in Egipt fond dyuersite  
 Off sundri lettres, parted into tweyne:  
 First for preestis, and for the comounte  
 Vulgar lettres he dede also ordeyne.  
 And Fenycys dede ther besy payne  
 Lettres off Greek to fynde in ther entent,  
 Which that Cadmus first into Grece sent,

Isis made a two-  
 fold alfaber  
 in Egypt, and  
 the Phenicians  
 discovered  
 2440 Greek letters  
 numbering  
 seventeen, which  
 Cadmus sent to  
 Greece.

Which in noumbre fulli wer seuentene;  
 Whan off Troye was endid the bataile,  
 Pallamydes, ther language to susteene,  
 Put thre therto, which gretli dede auaille.  
 Pidagorus, for prudent gouernaile,  
 Fond first out Y, a figur to discerne  
 The liff heer short and liff that is eterne.

2444

2448

First Latyn lettres off our A. B. C.,  
 Carmentis fond, off ful hih prudence.  
 Grete Omerus, in Isidre ye may see,  
 Fond among Grekis crafft off eloquence.  
 First in Rome, be souereyn excellence,  
 Off rethorik Tullius fond the flours,  
 Ple and diffence off subtil oratours.

[p. 118] Latin letters  
 were invented  
 2452 by Carmentis,  
 Greek elo-  
 quence by  
 Homer, Roman  
 oratory by  
 Tully.

2456

Callicrates, a grauer most notable,  
 Off whiht yuor dede his besynesse,  
 His hand, his eye so iust wer & so stable,  
 Off an ampte to graue\* out the liknesse,  
 Vpon the ground as Nature doth hym dresse.  
 This crafft he fond, as Sardanapall  
 Fond idilnesse mooder to vices all.

Callicrates  
 carved a life-  
 sized ant out  
 of ivory,  
 2460

2464

Off a screueyn Bochas maketh menciou<sup>n</sup>,  
 How in a scrowe off lital quantite  
 Wrot off al Troie the destruccioun,  
 Folwyng Omerus be gret subtilite:  
 Which among Grekis is had in gret deynte,  
 Because he was founde in his writyng,  
 So compendious the story rehersyng.

and Bochas  
 mentions a  
 scrivener who  
 wrote the entire  
 Iliad on a little  
 scroll.  
 2468

2438. sundri] sondris H.

2440. also did H.

2450. 2nd liff] be liff H, be life R 3, the life P.

2453. ysodre H.

2457. off] &amp; H.

2461. grauen B.

- Mirmecides\* made a char also 2472  
 made a chariot  
 and a ship so  
 small that a  
 bee might cover  
 them both with  
 his wings.  
 And a smal shipp, with al the apparaile,  
 So that a bee myhte close hem bothe too  
 Vnder his weengis, which is a gret meruaile —  
 And nothyng seyn off al the hool entaile: 2476  
 This crafft he fond off vertuous besynesse  
 Teschewe the vice off froward idilnesse.
- Pan, the god of nature, first composed tunes on the flageolet, Mercury on the harp, and Bacchus discovered wine, the best of liquors.  
 Pan, god off Kynde, with his pipes seuene,  
 Off recorderis fond first the melodies. 2480  
 And Mercurie, that sit so hih in heuene,  
 First in his harpe fond sugred armonyes.  
 Holsum wyne thoruhfyned from ther lyes  
 Bachus fond first, of\* vynes heuy lade, 2484  
 Licour off licours corages for to glade.
- Perdix and Euclid invented geometry, Phcebus medicine, Albumasar astronomy, Minerva chariots, Jason seafaring,  
 Perdix be cumpas fond triangle and lyne,  
 And Euclid first fond geometrie,  
 And Phebus fond the crafft off medicyne. 2488  
 Albumasar [first] fond astronomye;  
 And Mynerua gan charis first to guye.  
 Iason first sailed, in story it is told,  
 Toward Colchos to wyne the Flees off Gold. 2492
- Ceres agriculture, Dionysus and Bellona warfare, and Mars' son Etholus sharp spears.  
 Ceres the goddesse fond first tilhe off lond;  
 Dionisius tryumphes transitorie.\*  
 And Bellona be force first out fond  
 Conquest be knyhtod, & in the feeld victorie. 2496  
 And Martis sone, as put is in memorie,  
 Callid Etholus, fond speris sharp & keene,  
 To renne a werre in platis briht and sheene.
- Aristæus first used milk and curds and honey, Piroides smote fire from flints, Pallas invented weaving  
 Eek Aristæus fond out the vsage 2500  
 Off mylk & cruddis, & off hony soote.  
 Piroides, for gret auantage,  
 Fro flyntes smet fir daryng in the roote.  
 And Pallas, which that may to cold do boote, 2504  
 Fond out weuyng, this is veray soth,  
 Thoruh hir prudence, off al maner cloth.

2472. Mirmecides] Marmychides B, Mirmychides H, Mirmichiades R 3, Myrmychides H 5, Mirmecides P.  
 2473. al the apparaile] a trapparaile H. 2474. a bee] A B H.  
 2475. a] om. H. 2480. the] om. H, R 3. 2481. sittith H.  
 2484. of] on B, J, R 3. 2487. gemetrye H.  
 2494. 96. transitoire, victoire B.  
 2496. be] of H — &] om. H. 2497. put is repeated in H.  
 2502. Purides H. 2505. weyvying H. 2506. hir] his H.

And Fido first fond out the science  
 Off mesours and off proporciouns,  
 And for marchantis dede his deligence  
 To fynde ballaunces be iust dyuysiouns,  
 Tauoide al fraude in citees & in touns  
 On outh<sup>r</sup>\* parti, pleynli to compile,  
 Off trewe weihte that ther wer no gile.

and Fido  
 weights and  
 2508 measures.

Compare in ordre cleerli all these thynges  
 Founde off old tyme be diligent trauaile,  
 To the plesaunce off pryncis & off kynges,  
 To shewe how moch[e] cunnyng may auaille,  
 And weie ageynward the froward aquitaile,  
 Contrariouli how Sardanapalle  
 Fond idilnesse mooder off vices alle.

Compare these  
 old inventions  
 with the worth-  
 2516 lessness of Sar-  
 danapalus, who  
 only discovered  
 that idleness is  
 the mother of  
 all vices.

Lat pryncis alle heeroff taken heed,  
 What auailleth vertuous besynesse,  
 And what damage the reuers doth in deed,  
 Vicious liff, slouth<sup>e</sup> and idilnesse;  
 And these exaumples lat hem eek inpresse  
 Amyd ther herte, and how Sardanapalle  
 Fond idilnesse mooder off vices alle.

2520

Let princes  
 remember the  
 advantage of  
 virtuous in-  
 2524 dustry and  
 the damage  
 done by idle-  
 ness.

## [¶ Lenvoy.]

**N**OBLE Pryncis, heer ye may weel see  
 As in a meour, off ful cleer euydence,  
 Be many exaumples mo than too or thre,  
 What harm folweth off slouth<sup>e</sup> & necligence,  
 Deepe enprentying in your aduertence,  
 How gret hyndryng doth wilful frowardnesse  
 To your estat thoruh vicious idilnesse.

2528 Noble Princes,  
 see as in a  
 mirror the  
 harm that  
 comes from  
 sloth and  
 neglect.

2532

Whan resoun faileth, and sensualite  
 Holdeth the bridel off lecherous insolence,  
 And sobirnesse hath lost his liberte,  
 And to fals lust is doon the reuerence,  
 And vice off vertu hath an apparence, —  
 Misledith pryncis off wilful reklesnesse  
 To gret error off froward idilnesse.

[p. 119] When reason  
 fails and vice  
 2536 takes on an  
 appearance of  
 virtue, princes  
 recklessly fall  
 into idleness,

2540

2507. Sido H. 2508. mesur<sup>e</sup> H.2512. outh<sup>r</sup>] nouth<sup>r</sup> B. 2514. Compare] Compas H, R 3.

2516. &amp; off] om. H.

2528. heer] om. H. 2532. empyrtyng H.



which has no  
other reward  
than sorrow  
and adversity.

Ther may to slouthe non other guerdoun be,  
Nor non other condigne recompense,  
But sorwe, myscheeff and aduersite,  
Sodeyn vengauunce and onwar violence,  
Whan ye be froward in your magnyficence  
To knowe the Lord and bowe be meeknesse  
Tobeie his preceptis and eschewe idilnesse.

2544

2548

[How Amazias in Iuda kyng for pride and presumptioun was venquysshed in bataile & aftir slayn.]<sup>1</sup>

As Bochas sat  
musing in his  
study, Amaziah  
and his son  
Uzziah appeared  
first of a num-  
ber of mighty  
kings;

IN his studi as Bochas sat musyng,  
With many vnkouth soleyn fantasie,  
To hym appered many a myhti kyng;  
And toform alle cam worthi Amazie,  
His sone also, that callid was Iosie,  
Off Daudis blood descendyng, as I reede,  
Ech afftir othir in Iuda to succeede.

2552

and Amaziah  
began to com-  
plain on For-  
tune, who cast  
both him and  
his son from  
their thrones.

First Amazias compleyned on Fortune,  
Causyng his greuous gret aduersites,  
The traitouresse callid in comune,  
These kynges tweyne castyng from ther sees;  
Whos ouerturning from ther dignites,  
Onwar fallyng, dreedful and terrible,  
Been ceriousli remembrid in the Bible.

2556

2560

Men may read  
about their sad  
end in the  
Bible, so I shall  
only glean out  
the chief facts.

Ther pitous eende men may ther reede & see,  
How Fortune ther fatis dede entrete.  
Wherfore teschewe & fleen prolixite,  
Al tedious thyng in this processe to lete,  
And in substauce to glen out the grete,  
Off ther fallyng I purpose nat to spare  
Compendiousli the causes to declare.

2564

2568

Amaziah held  
the sceptre over  
Judah and grew  
proud

This Amazias hauyng gouernaunce  
Be ful iust title off successioun,  
The sceptre off Iuda, with al the hool puissaunce, 2572

2542. to] no H, P. — *This stanza is omitted in J.*

2556. First] For H.

2565. teschewe] to shewen H, to shew R 3.

2566. Al] Off J — tedious thyng] tediouste H, tediouste R 3, tediousty P.

2569. causes] cause H. 2571. off] havyng H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 49 verso.

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Ful pesibli in his possessioun,  
Til that pride and fals presumpcioun  
Most frowardli dede his herte enbrace,  
Which al attonys made hym lose his grace.

2576

In herte he hadde a maner\* veynglorie,  
Because that God made hym to preuaile  
In his conquest and to have\* victorie,  
Amalechitis to venquysshe in bataile,  
Eek Gabanytis, as he them dede assaile,  
Purposyng[e] afftir, yiff he myhte,  
With Israelitis off pride for to fyhte.

2580

and vainglorious because  
God helped him  
defeat the  
Amalekites and  
Edomites.

Onto kyng Ioas off Israel he sente,  
Hym comaundyng to obeien his biddyng,  
And be lik subiect, as wern in ther entente,  
His predecessours in al maner thyng,  
Whilom to Dauid, the noble worthi kyng.  
This was his sonde to Ioas, plat and pleyn,  
Which bi a problem thus wrot to hym ageyn:

2584

He wanted to  
fight Israel  
and commanded  
King Jehoash  
to be subject  
to him.

"The ougli thistil off the valis lowe,  
Proudli presumyng aboue[n] his degre,  
To make his pride openli be knowe,  
Sent his message to the cedre tre,  
That his sone myhte weddid be  
To his douhter; al-thouh in substaunce  
Atwen hem too was a gret discordaunce.

2588

2592

Jehoash answered, "The  
ugly thistle of  
the vale sent  
to the cedar-  
tree, saying,  
'give thy  
daughter to  
my son in  
marriage.' But  
the wild beasts  
of the forest  
trod down the  
thistle. Not a  
leaf or even a  
prick was left."

But off the forest the beestis sauagyne  
In ther corages hadde theroff disdeyn.  
Alle off assent fersli dede enclyne  
The thistel leuys abrod vpon the pleyn,  
That ther was nouthur leff nor prikke seyn."  
This was the problem, which Ioas be wrytyng  
Sent in a pistil to Amazie the kyng.

2600

¶ But Iosephus in his origynal,  
The said epistil, as he doth expresse,  
Seith off the vale how the poudre smal  
Off pride sente to the hih cipresse,  
That his douhter, off excellent fairnesse,  
Onto his sone, pleynli to descryue,  
Myhte be delyuered & hauen hir to wyue.

2604

2608

Iosephus sub-  
stitutes the  
puff-ball and  
cypress;

2577. maner] maner off B. 2579. have] han B.  
2581. them dede] did them H.  
2600. fersli] freshly H. 2611. &] to H.

- and, according to him, the puff-ball was cast abroad. But a fell beeste, which that beside stood, 2612  
Off cruel ire and indignacioun,  
With feet disdeynyng the pouder caste abroad  
Hih in the air aboute hym environ.  
The which example conceyued off resoun, 2616  
Who that attempteth to clymben hiȝ aloffte,  
With onwar chaung his fall is ful onsoffte.
- There is no congruity between a thistle and a cedar or a cypress and a puff-ball. Royalty should not be married to persons of low birth. Atwen the cedre, off tre[e]s most roiall, [p. 120]  
And a sharp thistil is no conveyence, 2620  
Nor twen a cipresse, statli\* founde att all,  
And lothsum pouder is a gret difference:  
For roial blood sholde ha[ue] non assistance  
To be ioyned nor knet in mariage 2624  
With such as been brouht forth off low parage.
- The thistle, although it has some good qualities, also has pricks as sharp as a spine. The cedre is strong & myhti off substance,  
In his vpgrowyng riht as any lyne;  
And though the thistil ha[ue] spottis off plesaunce, 2628  
He hath eek prikkis, sharp as any spyne.  
And bothe naturis, pleynli to termyne,  
The cedre off kynde, who looke[th] weel aboute,  
To no thistil\* sholde his braunchis loute. 2632
- The cypress is fragrant, but a puff-ball troubles the air with dust and gets in people's eyes. Holsum off odour is the fair cipresse,  
As bookis telle, and vertuous off kynde;  
Dust & pouder, pleynli to expresse,  
Troubleth the air & maketh folkis blynde: 2636  
For which in spousaile conveyence to fynde,  
Lat estatys off ther berthe honourable,  
Voide al raskail & wedde ther semblable.
- Honourable estates should avoid rabble. Amaziah lost his temper, and made war on Jehoash; but his men ran away. But Amazias wolde nat be war 2640  
For no warnyng, nor for no prophecie,  
But stille in herte gret hatrede [he] bar  
Ageyn kyng Ioas, off malice & envie;  
Into a\* feld brouht al his cheualrie, 2644  
Gadred them out, bothe nyȝ and ferre,  
Geyn Godis will on hym to gynnne a werre.

2621. twen] atween H — statli] estatli B, estatly J.

2623. For] Full H — sholde] shal H.

2629. He] &amp; H.

2632. thistil] thouthistil B, H, thouththistil J, thouthystyl H 5,  
thistill R 3, thistle P.

2636. air] day H.

2639. al] of H.

2642. he] om. J.

2644. a] the B. 2646. on] geyn H.

And kyng Ioas, ful lik a worthi knyht,  
 Into the feeld[e] faste gan hym speede;  
 And alle the knyhtis off Iuda anon riht  
 Wer smet off vengauunce with a sodeyn dreede —  
 To bidde hem fle, God wot, it was no neede,  
 And Amazias, for al his gret[e] pride,  
 Stood destitut and no man be his side.

2648 and Jehoshaphat captured him

2652

With hym was non lefft off al his meyne,  
 So God and Ioas ageyn hym wrouhte.  
 Off Ierusalem entred the cite,  
 And Amazie off force with hym he brouhte;  
 And in the temple the tresour out he souhte,  
 Gold and siluer, and hooli ther richesse;  
 And to Samarie hom he gan hym dresse.

2656 and took all the treasure of the temple to Samaria.

2660

And Amazias he leet out off prisoun,  
 Afftir al this, and suffred hym go fre.  
 To his myscheeff and his confusioun,  
 He was delyuered from his captiuite;  
 For slayn he was in Lachis the cite,  
 Among his freendis be symulacioun,  
 His deth conspired vnder ful fals tresoun.

2664 Afterwards he set Amaziah free, and Amaziah was soon afterward slain in Lachish.

[How god vpon Iosias succedyng kyng next in Iuda  
 toke vengauunce/ smot him with lepre.]<sup>1</sup>

**A**FFTIR in Iuda, the myhti regioun,  
 Next Amazias, Iosias gan succeede,  
 Wonder manli & famous of renoun,  
 In alle his werkis ful prouident in deede.  
 And off his knythod venquissid, as I reede,  
 The Palestynes, for al ther gret puissance,  
 With al Arabie he brouht onto vttraunce.

2668 After Amaziah, Uziah succeeded, manly and famous.

2672

Bilte touns and many strong cite,  
 And onto Egipt he his boundis sette;  
 Made castelis beside the Rede Se,  
 And in his conquest, whom that euer he mette,  
 Off manli pride he ne wolde lette —  
 I meene alle tho that were his aduersaires —  
 To his lordshepe to make hem tributaires.

2676 He defeated the Palestines, conquered Arabia and built towns and castles.

2680

2658. 2nd the] om. H.

2674. vttraunce] myschaunce H.

2681. his] his gret H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 50 recto.

He also rebuilt  
Jerusalem,  
strengthening  
its defences,

He dede his labour also to repare  
Ierusalem afftir his ruyne;  
The wallis rered, which on the soil lay bare, 2684  
Made newe tour[e]s, riht as any lyne,  
Fany's off gold ther torettis tenlumyne,  
And tafforce hem, leet werkmen vndertake  
Squar bastiles & bolwerkis to make. 2688

and planted  
gardens and  
vineyards and  
grafted trees.

He delited to make fressh gardynes,  
Dyuers greynes & herbis for to knowe,  
Rzioisshid to plante sundri vynes,  
To griffe trees and seedis for to sowe, 2692  
And straunge frutis [to] make hem growe arowe.  
And with hym hadde, his enmyes to encoumbre,  
Thre hundrid thousand manli men in noumbre.

He became very  
much dreaded  
for his bravery,  
and finally  
grew proud

His noble fame gan to sprede wide, 2696  
And gret[elli] drad for his hih prowesse,  
Wherthoruh his herte corrupt was with pride,  
Because onli off his gret richesse;  
And frowardli he dede his besynesse 2700  
For to maligne in his estat roial  
Ageyn the Lord, the which is immortal.

and obstinate  
to God.

To God aboute he gan wexe obstynat, [p. 121]  
That be processe ful smal he dede wyne; 2704  
And sauour cauhte in his roial estat  
To folwe his fader in onthrif & synne,  
That grace and vertu from hym dede twynne.  
In most shynyng off his magnyficence, 2708  
Fortune proudli assailed his excellence.

So Fortune de-  
cided to assail  
him, especially  
when he  
dressed up like  
a bishop out of  
pure wanton-  
ness and  
started to  
sacrifice in the  
temple, which  
vexed

Caste she wolde withynne a litil while  
His surquedie & froward pride assaile,  
And ful onwarli deceyue hym and begile, 2712  
To make his power tappallyn & to faile,  
Whan that this kyng took on thapparaille  
Off a bisshop, off veray frowardnesse,  
And into temple proudli gan hym dresse, 2716

Beyng in purpos, on a solempne day,  
To take his way up to the hih auter,  
Falsli vsurpyng, who-euer seide nay,

2692. griffe] grift H, grift R 3, graffe P — seede H.

2693. to] om. P.

2697. hih] om. J. 2702. 2nd the] om. H.

2706. &] & in H, R 3. 2714. that] om. H, R 3.

To sacrefie, holdyng the censer,  
 To for the auter, that shon of gold ful cleer.  
 For which offence, the Bible seith the same,  
 Azarias the bisshop dede hym blame.

Gan withstonde hym in the face anon,  
 Four score preestis beyng in presence,  
 Off the kynrede descendid off Aaron,  
 Which forbad hym & made resistence,  
 That with his hand he sholde putte incence  
 Vpon the auter, ageyn[es] Godis lawe,  
 Hym chargyng boldli his presence to withdrawe.

But off despiht he made them holde ther pes,  
 In payne off deth began hem to manace;  
 And sodenli among[es] al the pres,  
 An erthequaue fill in the same place.  
 And therewithal in the kynges face,  
 Off the sonne ther smet a bem so briht,  
 That al his visage was scorkid with the liht.

He wex a lepre, ful foul and riht horrible  
 For his offence, as God list ordeyne;  
 To euery man off look he was terrible,  
 And but fewe his myscheeff gan compleyne.  
 And a gret hill the same hour karff on tweyne,  
 Nat ferr a-side from the tou[n] withoute,  
 Cites destroieng that stood round aboute.

On kyng Iosie God took his vengauce,  
 For al his lordshepe & his magnyficence,  
 To punyshe his pride & his froward puisaunce,  
 And brouht hym lowe for his gret offence:  
 For his persone was put out off presence  
 Perpetueli, as Hooli Writ can telle,  
 Fer from al peeppe with lepres for to duelle.

His flessch was troubled with dyuers passiouns,  
 For his siknesse auoided the cite;  
 In cri and sorwe and lamentaciouns  
 His liffe he ladde, in gret aduersite.  
 And so he deied in sorwe and pouerte,  
 Sympli buried, for al his grete myht,  
 Withynne an iland that stood ferr out of siht.

2720

2724 Bishop Azariah  
 who, with his  
 eighty priests  
 behind him,  
 ordered Uziah  
 off the premises.

2728

But Uziah  
 told them to  
 hold their  
 tongues, and  
 suddenly there  
 was an earth-  
 quake, and the  
 king's face was  
 scorched by a  
 ray of the sun  
 and he became  
 a leper, and a  
 hill split in  
 two and de-  
 stroyed cities.  
 Thus God took  
 his vengeance.

2740

2744

Uzziah was  
 cast down from  
 his throne and  
 sent to a lazar  
 house; and  
 when he died  
 he was buried  
 without cere-  
 mony in an  
 island.

2748

2752

2756

2720. sacrefie] sacrifice H, sacrifice R 3, P. 2721. shon] om. H.

2722. be which H. 2730. boldli] proudly H.

2732. he be gan H. 2737. visage] face P — scorched P.

2742. the] þat H. 2758. stood ferr] ferr was H.

¶ An exortacion to Princis to be auisid to do ageyn goddis Preceptes.<sup>1</sup>

Let princes be careful not to offend God; for unless they repent they will suffer for it.

**L**AT pryncis all[e] in ther prouidence  
Be riht weel war any thyng tattame, 2760  
Which onto God sholde been offence,  
List that the fyn conclude to ther shame.  
Lat them thynke, for al ther noble fame,  
But thei repente, God off his iustise 2764  
Ther froward pride onwarli will chastise.

And let them not meddle with the affairs of the church. God will not permit that.

Lat hem be war off malice to presume  
Ageyn his cherche to doon offenscioun;  
For God off riht all tirantis will consume 2768  
In ful short tyme for ther presumpcioun.  
Which wil nat suffre ther dominacioun  
To interupte, for al ther grete myht,  
Nor breke the fraunchise off hooli cherches ryht. 2772

Let Uziah's example teach prudent princes to do due reverence to holy church.

To prudent pryncis, which that can discern,  
Lat kyng Iosias, considred his offence,  
Been in ther mynde a merour & lanterne,  
To hooli cherche to do due reuerence; 2776  
And conceyue in ther magnificence,  
God will off riht, be thei neuer so stronge,  
Chastise ther malice, thouh he abide longe.

[How kyng Ozie was taken bi kyng Salmanazar and deied in prisoun.]<sup>2</sup>

Another king, called Hoshea, was taken by Shalmaneser and led captive into Assyria.

**T**HER was a-nother, that callid was  
Ozie, [p. 122] 2780  
Which whilom regned, as I afferme dar,  
In Israel, whom Fortune be envie  
Made hym be take or that he was war,  
Besegid aboute off kyng Salmanazar; 2784  
And in Tassirie vnder his daunger,  
The Bible tellith, he was prisoner.

His towns were destroyed, his people enslaved, and Hoshea died of grief.

His cites, touns brouht to destruccioun,  
And al his peeple vnder long seruage 2788  
Wer take and kept in strong[e] Babiloun,

2772. chirch H. 2783. that] om. H.

2785. vn to Assyrye H, in to Assirie J, R, 3, into Assirie P, in Tassrye H 5.

<sup>1</sup> The same heading in MS. J. leaf 50 verso.

<sup>2</sup> MS. J. leaf 50 verso.



Suffred ther gret peyne & gret damage.  
And in a presoun, be furious outrage,  
This said Ozias, in cheynes bounde sore,  
For sorwe deide: off hym write I no more.

2792

[How Senacheryb kyng of Assirie was slayne.]<sup>1</sup>

WITH these forsaid woful kynges thre,  
Senacherib, off Assirie kyng,  
Cam to Iohn Bochas, most ougli on to see,  
Ful pitousli his fate compleynyng.  
And speciali his onwar chaungyng  
He gan bewaile, oppressid in his thouht,  
From hih noblesse how he was brouht to nouht. 2800

2796 Senacherib,  
ugly to look  
upon, com-  
plained how he  
was brought to  
nought.

His renoun spradde thoruh many dyuers rewm,  
And peeplis all[e] gan hym magnefie;  
A siege he laide onto Ierusalem,  
In the tyme off kyng Sedechie.  
But in his most froward surquedie,  
Godis aungel tofor the cite  
An hundrid thousand slouh off his meyne.

2804 His renown  
was great, and  
he laid siege  
to Jerusalem,  
but God's  
angel slew his  
men

And the mor to maken hym afferd,  
Mid off his peeple, the silue same nyht,  
Godis aungel shooff away his berd  
With a sharp suerd that shon cleer & bryht.  
Lefte his siege & took hym onto flyht;  
And in a temple, his goddis worshepyng,  
His sonys slouh hym as he sat knelyng.

2808 and shaved  
his beard, which  
so terrified him  
that he ran  
away and was  
afterward slain  
by his sons.

2812

[How kyng Sedechie/ for fals forsweryng was slayn  
and made blynde in prisoun.]<sup>2</sup>

TOUCHYNG the compleynt of kyng Sedechie,  
And off his sorwes to shewe the maner,  
Hooli Writ dooth cleerli. specefie,  
Wherfore it were but veyn to telle hem heer.  
For ther men may the processe pleylni ler,  
How Ioachym, kyng off Ierusalem,  
His owne brother, was lad out off his rewm.

2816 Zedekiah's story  
is told in the  
Bible.  
His brother  
Jehoiachin and  
his wife and  
children were  
taken captive  
by

2820

2794. With] And with H, R 3, H 5.

2802. peeple H, peple R 3, pepyll H 5 — peeplis all] all people

P. 2812. onto] to be H.

2819. men] ye H — may] om. J.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 50 verso.

<sup>2</sup> MS. J. leaf 51 recto.

Nebuchad-  
nezzar, which  
grieved  
Zedekiah.

Wheroff in herte he felte ful gret sor,  
This Sedechias, as it is ther founde,  
Because the kyng Nabugodonosor  
His brother heeld, strong in prisoun bounde,  
Fulli in purpos the Iewes to confounde;  
For this tirant hadde in that mortal striff  
His brethre, childre in prisoun, & his wiff.

2824

2828

But when  
Nebuchad-  
nezzar restored  
him to his throne  
on condition  
of paying a  
yearly tribute  
to the  
Babylonians,  
he became  
so elated  
that he

And yit this tirant in his tyrannye  
This fauour dede in al his fell[e] rage  
Onto this moste woful Sedechie,  
To suffre hym regne in his gret[e] age,  
Fro yeer to yeer to paie hym a truage,  
Be feith and oth and composicioun,  
Reised off his peeple & brouht to Babiloun.

2832

forgot his  
brother and  
his friends,

Yit Sedechias in especial,  
Be a maner off fals felicite,  
Hymselff reioished in his see roiall  
To ocupe that noble dignite,  
And so forgat the gret aduersite  
Off his brother and other freendis all,  
Touchyng the myscheeff that thei wer in fall.

2836

2840

and soon  
decided that he  
would not pay  
his tribute any  
longer.

Off pride he fill into presumpcioun,  
Whan he remembrid his brethre & his lynage,  
Considred how fro kyng Salamoun  
He was descendid be title off heritage,  
Gan disdeyne to paien his truage,  
And to maligne, in herte he was so wroth,  
And falsli brak his suraunce and his oth.

2844

2848

He thought to  
himself,  
"Solomon paid  
no tribute;  
tribute was paid  
to him: why  
should I do it?"

He hadde a maner indignacioun,  
Which he cauhte off old remembraunce,  
How tyme passid, to kyng Salamoun,  
Be his manli prudent gouernaunce,  
Kynges aboute for a recognisaunce  
Paied tribut, and durst it na~~w~~ withseie  
Fro yeer to yeer his noblesse to obeie.

2852

2856

So he rebelled  
against the king  
of Babylon,

Which thyng remembrid off kyng Sedechie,  
As he wex gret and strong in his puissaunce,  
Off hih disdeyn his tribut gan denye,

2828. brethre] brothir H, brother H 5, brethern P — children P.

2830. his] this H. 2832. hym] hem H.

2838. reioysshyn H. 2844. 2nd his] om. H.

Sette a-side his feith and assuraunce,  
 So that his oth stood in no substaunce;  
 For he ageyn the kyng off Babiloun  
 Presumptuousli fill in rebelloun.

2860

And his kyngdam to strengthe & fortiefe, [p. 123]  
 Thouhte he wolde to his auauntage  
 The kyng off Egipt haue on his partie,  
 Off pride he fill into so gret outrage,  
 That he no mor wolde paien his truage;  
 But fynali such weies he hath souht,  
 That off his oth lital he rouhte or nouht.

2864

and, allying  
 himself with the  
 king of Egypt,  
 went back on  
 his promised  
 word,

2868

But O alas, it is a doolful thyng  
 To be remembred, in hih or low degre,  
 That any prynce or any worthi kyng  
 Sholde false his oth or ontrew be;  
 Or that men sholde such variaunce see  
 In ther corages, which been so hih[e] born,  
 For any cause falsli to be forsworn.

2872

which is  
 a shameful thing  
 for any prince  
 or king to do.

2876

Be report it doth ther fame trouble,  
 Infortuneth and clipseth ther noblesse,  
 Whan a prynce is off his heste double,  
 And chargith nat, off wilful reclesnesse,  
 Al-be his promys conclude on doubilnesse.  
 Thouh God a while suffre hem and respite,  
 At onset hour ther falsnesse he will quite.

2880

It injures their  
 good name and  
 eclipses their  
 noblesse, and  
 God is sure to  
 punish them  
 for it.

2884

His warnyng offte he sent to them affor,  
 Because thei lacke prudent policie,  
 Record I take off Nabugodonosor,  
 Which cam onwarli on kyng Sedechie,  
 For he his tribut gan falsli hym denye;  
 With al his power, as he dede abraide,  
 To Ierusalem a myhti siege he laide.

2888

The result was,  
 that Nebu-  
 chadnezzar  
 suddenly de-  
 scended  
 on Zedekiah,

Thei withynne constreyned were off neede,  
 The kyng hymself, ther was no bett diffence,  
 With manys flessch his peple for to feede,  
 Whil the Caldeies be myhti violence,  
 Off verai force, withoute resistance,  
 On fals forsweryng for to taken wrake,  
 Ther myhti tour[e]s and ther wallis brake.

2892

laid siege to Je-  
 rusalem, starved  
 the Jews into  
 eating one  
 another, de-  
 stroyed the city  
 and killed most  
 of the people.

2896

2879. Infortunatith R 3 — eclipsith H, R 3.

2888. on] vpon H. 2894. peeplis H.

- Zedekiah was  
put in chains,  
his children slain,  
his wives  
handed over to  
strangers and  
his eyes rent out.
- To slen and kille thei list non for to spare,  
Whom-euer thei mette or cam in ther siht;  
Sedechias leffte the toun al bare,  
But take he was, as he hym took to fliht,  
In cheynys bounde and fetrid anon riht,  
In whose presence, tencrece his peynes anon,  
His yonge childre were slay[e]n euerichon.  
His wyues all, most woful off ther cheres,  
Which in ther tyme most goodli were and fair,  
Delyuered wern in handis off straungeres;  
And mor, alas, to putte hym in dispair,  
Into his kyngdam neuer to ha[ue] repair,  
With sharp[e] tonges, it was to gret a payne,  
Out off his hed wer rent his eien tweyne.
- His city  
Jerusalem was  
burnt to the  
ground, his  
treasure sent to  
Babylon, and he  
died miserably  
in prison.
- Off Ierusalem his cite was ibrent  
Pleyn to\* the ground into ashes dede.  
His gret riches, his tresour hooli sent  
To Babiloun, with stonys bleu and rede;  
Vesselis off gold, which richest wer in deede,  
Withoute merci or remissioun,  
Caldeies took to ther possessioun.
- That is what  
perjury leadsto.
- And thus in sorwe and in wrechidnesse  
He deied, alas, fetred in prisoun.  
Loo, heer the eende off periurie & falsnesse!  
Loo, how Fortune can turnen vp-so-doun  
Off mortal men the condicioun:  
Now richest shynyng in\* prosperite,  
With onwar chaung to hatful pouerte.
- What do royal  
thrones avail  
people who are  
not secure in  
them?
- Now men lefft up to roial dignites,  
Now hih aloffte be fulsum habundaunce:  
But what auailleth to sitte in roial sees  
To folk that han therin non assuraunce,  
Namli whan Fortune holdeth the balaunce,  
Which ay off custum onto hih estatis  
Hath a fals ioie to shewen hir chekmatis.
- Amaziah fell,  
Uzziah became  
a leper, Zedekiah  
died in prison.
- Record I take off pryncis mo than on,  
Ther woful fatis hanging in iupartie,  
Remembrid late, and among echon

2900

2904

2908

2912

2916

2920

2924

2928

2932

2936

2904. peyn H.

2913. ibrent] brent J.

2914. to] into B, J, H, P, H 5 — the] om. H 5.

2925. in] in hih B, J, in hygh H 5. 2930. have H.

2935. hangyng] havyng H.

The woful fal off kyng Amazie,  
His sone eek lepre, which callid was Iosie,  
And last off all[e], how in Babiloun,  
Kyng Sedechias deied in prisoun.

2940

¶ *Lenvoye.*

**N**OBLE Pryncis, considreth the fallas  
Off Fortunys froward flat[e]rie;  
Seeth hir deceites in many dyuers cas,  
How she first mokkid manli Amazie,  
Which slay[e]n was for his surquedie  
To yeue you warnyng, bexauple as ye may reede,  
Whan ye sit hiest, your fal is most to dreede.

2944

Noble Princes,  
when you sit  
highest, then is  
your fall most to  
be dreaded.

And as it is remembred\* in Bochas, [p. 124]  
Eek in the Bible off the kyng Iosie,  
In his tyme how famous that he was  
Bothe off richesse and off cheualrie,  
Punshed with lepre, bookis specefie,  
For his presumyng: remembrith this in deede,  
Whan ye sit hiest, your fal is most to dreede.

2948

Remember how  
Uzziah was pun-  
ished for his  
presumption,

2952

Al worldli glorie\* fleeth hens a gret[e] pas,  
I take witesse off kyng Sedechie;  
For fals forsweryng he slay[e]n was, alas!  
Maad blynd in prisoun; this story cannat lie.  
Thus sheweth Fortune, thoruh hir froward envie,  
To you, Pryncis, yif ye list taken heede,  
Whan ye sit hiest, your fal is most to dreede.

2956

and how King  
Zedekiah was  
slain for  
forswearing.

2960

[How kyng Astriages labored to disherite Cirus/ but  
god suffrid his malice not to preuaile.]<sup>1</sup>

**A**FFTIR these kynges, on folwed in the pres,  
And gan to Bochas his compleynt discure;  
And he was callid the g<sup>r</sup>ete Astriages,  
Which tolde in ordre his vnkouth auenture,  
Lord off Asie, as bookis us assure,  
And hadde off tresour duryng al his liff  
A-boue alle kynges a prerogatiff.

2964

After these  
kings followed  
Astyages, the  
richest prince of  
his time.

2968

2948. is remembred] remembreth B, remembrith J, H 5.

2949. 2nd the] om. H.

2955. gloire B.

2958. this] his H.

2963. to discure H.

2964. Astiages P.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 51 verso.

He lacked  
nothing but a  
male heir,

Most fortunat in al his gouernaile,  
Felte off Fortune non aduersite,  
Sauf an heir male, nothyng dede hym failē;  
For he most glorious sat in his roial see: 2972  
Off worldli welthe he lakked no plente,  
Except onli, as clerkis off hym write,  
He hadde no sone his kyngdam tenherite,

and once dreamt  
of a vine that  
grew, and a  
stream of water,  
clear as beryl,  
that arose, in his  
daughter  
Mandane's  
womb, both  
spreading over  
all Asia,

Which to his welthe was gret disencres, 2976  
Lest successioun failed in his lyne.  
A douhter had he callid Mundanes,  
Out off whos wombe, as bookis determyne,  
He drempte a-nyht[e] how he sauh a vyne 2980  
In his auesioun, with hym so it stood,  
Ouer al Asie his braunchis spredde abroad.

He hadde also a reuelacioun,  
Slepyng a-nyht[e] afftir his souper, 2984  
Thouh he nat knew thexposicioun,  
He thouhte he sauh a cristallyn ryuer,  
With lusti watris, as any berell cleer,  
Out off hir wombe, with his stremys fressh 2988  
The soil of Asie make tendre and nessh.

and could not  
understand what  
it meant,

Touchyng this reuer and this lusty vyne  
To hym shewed in his auisioun,  
Withynne hymself he coud[e] nat termyne, 2992  
Theroff to fynde no cleer conclusioun  
Withoute sum maner exposicioun  
To hym declared be folkis in sentence,  
Which off such dremys hadde experience. 2996

until his  
philosophers and  
diviners

To hym he callid his astronomeris,  
His philisophres and his dyuynours,  
That knew the meuyng off the nyne speeris,  
Ymages off sterris, ther houses & ther tours; 3000  
And such as wern expert expositours.  
And whan thei wern assemblid euerichon,  
Touchyng his drem thei corded all in on.

told him that his  
daughter would  
have a son, by  
whom one day  
he would be put  
out of his king-  
dom. This was  
to be his fate.

To telle hym trouthe thei wer nat rec[e]les, — 3004  
Saide his douhter, fro whom ther cam a vyne,  
She that be name was callid Mundanes,  
Sholde haue a sone descendyng from his lyne,  
Whos noble fame thoruh Asia sholde shyne, 3008  
Which sholde [hym] putte, thoruh his hih renoun,  
Be\* force off armys out off his regioun.

3009. hym] om. J — hym putte] pull hym H.  
3110. Be] Hym be B, J — armys] hys armes P.



This was his fate; he myhte it nat refuse,  
The heuenli cours but it dede faile.

3012 Whereupon he  
thought he  
would try to  
avoid it,

Whereupon he sore gan to muse,  
Such fantasies dede his herte assaile;  
Fill in gret doubte off ther dyuynaile,  
Thouhte he wolde make purueiaunce  
For to withstonde Godis ordenaunce.

3016

Ful hard it is to make resistance  
Geyn thyng ordeyned, whan God will that it be;  
And namli ther, wher as influence  
Off heuene aboue hath shape a destyne:  
Sum men recorde that no man may it fle.  
The doom off this, wher that it holde or flitte,  
Tastronomeris al hooli I committe.

3020 although men  
say that no one  
may escape his  
destiny.

3024

This said[e] kyng, off whom I spak but late,  
Caste he wolde, for his auantage,  
The ordenaunce reuersen and the fate  
Off the heuene, with al the surplusage,  
And yeue his douhter as in mariage  
To sum onworthi poore infortunat  
That neuer were likli to rise to hih estat.

3028 So the king  
determined  
to give his  
daughter to  
some poor, un-  
distinguished  
man,

And in this wise, kyng Astriages [p. 125]  
Maried his douhter, as in his entent,  
To on onworthi callid. Cambises,  
Deemyng therbi, be short auysement,  
Withynne hymselff that he was riht prudent,  
Wenyng that noblesse cam be discent off blood,  
And nat be grace, nor as the heuene stood.

3032 and married her  
to an unworthy  
named Cam-  
byses. He  
thought nobility  
came by blood  
and not by  
3036 grace, and  
forgot about  
such men as  
Socrates, who  
possessed all  
moral virtue,

In his resoun was nat comprehendid,  
How Socrates, maistir off Platoun,  
Off ful low bed bi berthe was descendid,  
And nat tenherite kyngdam nor regioun,  
But for to haue fulli possessioun  
Off moral vertu and philosophie,  
Duryng his liff his witt he dede applie.

3040

3044

He souhte contrees for wisdam and science,  
And secre cunnynge to serch[e] dede his peyne;  
And he fond out thoruh his deligence,

3048 discovered that  
the soul was  
immortal,

3012. faile] falle H.

3022. men] om. H. 3025. saide] same H.

3031. likli] like H. 3041. bi berthe] om. H.

This philisophre, as bookis acerteine,  
 To ioie reserued outhur onto peyne,  
 Be grace off God, which is eternall,  
 How menyis soulis be founde ay inmortal. 3052

and was judged  
 by Apollo to be  
 the wisest  
 philosopher of  
 his time,

The grete Appollo, in bookis it is founde,  
 Gaff iugement off equite and riht,  
 That Socrates in vertu most habounde,  
 And most preferrid in eueri manys siht, 3056  
 Was callid off wisdam the lanterne & the liht,  
 And wisest named, at evyn and at pryme,  
 Off philisophres that wer in his tyme.

and Euripides,  
 who was called  
 most honourable  
 (although his  
 mother was  
 vicious) and  
 wrote many  
 tragedies and  
 told the truth  
 to all.

The poete also callid Euripides, 3060  
 Most honourable callid in that age,  
 Al-be his mooder off liff was rec[el]les  
 And contagious thoruh vicious outrage:  
 Yit was this poete, for al his vil lynage, 3064  
 Most vertuous founden at assaies,  
 Off alle poetis that wer in his daies.

Callid in his tyme a gret tragician,  
 Because he wrot many tragedies, 3068  
 And wolde off trouthe spare no maner man,  
 But hem rebuken in his poetries,  
 Touchyng the vices off flesskli fantasies,  
 Compleyne in pryncis ther deedis most horrible, 3072  
 And ech thyng punshe that was to God odible.

Demosthenes,  
 greatest of  
 rhetoricians,  
 was born a poor  
 man, yet he was  
 the most  
 eloquent.

A-nother clerk callid Demostenes,  
 The moste subtil rethorician,  
 And most inuentiff among al the pres, 3076  
 That euer was sithe[n] the world began,  
 Al-be off berthe he was a poore man,  
 Yit hadde he most souereyn excellence  
 Mong philisophres off speche & eloquence. 3080

So it would seem  
 that royal blood  
 and high lineage  
 are of but small  
 advantage with-  
 out the grace of  
 God.

Be which exauple, me semeth dout[el]les,  
 That roial blood, nouthur hilt lynage  
 To mennys berthe yeueth but smal encres,  
 Nor onto vertu but litil auau[n]tage: 3084  
 For hih noblesse taketh nat his corage  
 Off riche nor poore, nor statis souereyne,  
 But off his grace, as God list to ordeyne.

3056. eueri] any H.

3073. punysh H, punnysh R 3, punysshed H 5, punishe P.

3074. Domestenes J. 3082. nouthur] nor J, P.

Wherefore, off foli kyng Astriages,  
 Contrariouſli ageyn al gent[e]rie,  
 Bad that his douhter callid Mundanes,  
 First whan folk with childe hir dede espie,  
 For tacomplishe his froward fantasie,  
 Whan it wer born, charging aboue all thyng,  
 Off Archanye to bern it to the kyng.

3088 Astrages was  
 foolish and not  
 a gentleman, for  
 he commanded  
 Mandane's new-  
 born child to be  
 taken to Har-  
 pagus to be cast  
 out to wild  
 beasts.

Which in that tyme was callid Arpagus;  
 And, as I fynde, he dede in vertu floure,  
 And pite\* hadde, the story tellith thus,  
 That beestis sholde the litil child deuoure.  
 But God that may in myscheeff best socoure,  
 To keepe the child was nat rek[e]les,  
 Ageyn the malice off kyng Astriages,

3096

Which hadde comaundid off malice & hatreede,  
 How that this child, greene & tendre off age,  
 Bi Arpagus sholde be cast in deede  
 To be deuoured off beestis most sauage.  
 But for he dradde to doon so gret outrage,  
 To his shepperde, hymselff to stonde at large,  
 The child to slen he fulli gaff the charge.

3100

But Harpagus  
 was afraid to  
 put the child to  
 death and told  
 his shepherd to  
 do it.

3108

[How yong Cirus was in to the Forest/ cast with  
 bestys to be deuoured.]<sup>1</sup>

THIS heerdeman, albe that he was loth  
 To execute this woful auenture,  
 Inta forest foorth with the child he goth,  
 And gaff to beestis that litil creature;  
 Whom to fostre, be grace ageyn nature,  
 A wilde bichche hir whelpis ther forsook,  
 And to hir pappis the litil child she took.  
 And with hir mylk she made hym suppe &  
 dyne,  
 And bisi was fro\* hym to enchace  
 Wilde foulis and beestis sauagyne,

The shepherd,  
 although un-  
 willing, took the  
 child into a  
 forest, where it  
 was suckled by  
 a wild bitch.

3112

[p. 126]

Behold how God  
 can preserve in-  
 nocents from  
 injury!

3116

3091. did hir H.

3094. Hircanye P. 3095. Harpagus P.

3097. pite] spint B, J, spyte P.

3102. hadde] om. H. 3108. 2nd the] in H.

3111. Inta] In to a H, J, R 3, H 5, P.

3117. fro] for B, H, H 5. 3118. bestis &amp; foulis H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 52 recto, *in margin*.

- That non ne durste neihhen to that place.  
 Loo, how that God disposen can his grace,  
 Innocentis fro myscheeff to preserue 3120  
 Geyn fals envie, which wolde make hem sterue!

O unkind blood,  
unnatural and  
full of hatred, to  
murder a child  
on whom even  
beasts have  
pity! O blood onkynde, founden in kynreede,  
 For couetise, O blood disnaturall 3124  
 Off fals malice, O blood ful off hatreede! —  
 To moordre a child born off the stok roiall!  
 Wher manys resoun is turned bestiall,  
 Falsli transfourmed onto cruelte, 3128  
 To slen a child wher beestis han pite!

The simple  
herdsman told  
his wife about  
the child, and  
she went with  
him to the forest  
to see it, and  
took it in her  
arms The celi heerde hath told his wiff the cas;  
 And she anon off pite dede arise,  
 With hir husbonde wente a ful gret pas 3132  
 Into the forest, beholdyng al the guise,  
 As heer-tofor[e]n ye han herd deuyse,  
 Seyng the child, with lippis tendre & soffte,  
 The bichchis pappis how he sok ful offte. 3136

The said[e] heerde callid Sparagos,  
 His wiff also, off whom toforn I tolde,  
 This yonge child took in ther depos;  
 And in hir armys she sofftli gan it folde. 3140  
 And he ful goodli hir face gan beholde,  
 And on his maner in the same while,  
 In childli wise on hir gan to smyle.

and fed it,  
although the  
wild bitch stood  
angrily at bay The childes lauhtre whan she dede aduerte,  
 With al hir hool[e] feithful dilligence 3144  
 She gan to cherishe it, and with al hir herte  
 She gaff it souk, with ful gret teuerence,  
 Albe the bichche made resistance, 3148  
 Compleynyng stood felli at abay,  
 The litil child whan she sauh lad away.

and howled  
when she carried  
it home with her Ful pitousli she gan to houke and crie,  
 At ther departyng doolfully compleyne, 3152  
 And afftir them ful faste gan to hie,  
 The child to lete she felte so gret a peyne.  
 Loo, how that God off merci can ordeyne  
 A cruel beeste such sorwe for to make, 3156  
 And so to mourne for a childes sake!

But eueri thyng that God will ha[ue] preserued,  
 Ne may nat faile to stonde in sekirnesse.  
 His secre doomys been to hymself reserued;  
 Ther can no man expowne hem, as I gesse.  
 For he shoop first that this shepperdesse,  
 Off Sparagos the trewe poore wiff,  
 For to be mene to saue the childes liff.

3160 What God  
 wishes preserved  
 is safe. God  
 saw to it that  
 the shepherdess  
 rescued the  
 child out of the  
 goodness of  
 her heart.

Hom to hir hous the child she ladde anon,  
 And it to fostre dede hir besynesse:  
 Off othir salari, God wot, knew she non,  
 Sauff that hir herte therto dede hir dresse.  
 And mor enterli, the story berth witnesse,  
 She tendrid hym, and with mor besi cure,  
 Than hym that was hir child born off nature.

3164 She cared for  
 him better than  
 if he had been  
 her own.

And as the story pleynli doth expresse,  
 This yonge child, as he wex in age,  
 Fro day to day encreced in noblesse,  
 Lik for to been riht manli off corage.  
 Cirus callid he was in that language,  
 To seyne in Latyn pleynli in substaunce,  
 A man iborn to gret enheritaunce.

3172 They named  
 him Cyrus,  
 which means in  
 Latin a man  
 born to great  
 inheritance.

And whan the renoun off his excellence  
 Bi long processe, and off his gret encres  
 Cam be report onto the audience  
 Off his aiel, the grete Astriages,  
 And how the kyng was founde rech[e]lles,  
 Callid Arpagus, for to do vengauce  
 On yonge Cirus, he fill in displeaunce.

3180 When Astyages  
 heard of all  
 this, he was  
 furious with  
 Harpagus

This is to meene Astriages was wroth,  
 That Arpagus was founde merciable  
 Cirus to saue, and for that he was loth  
 Ageyn[e]s al riht for to be vengable  
 To slen a child, a thyng nat comendable, —  
 Demyng off trouthe in his conscience,  
 God was nat paied, to moordre innocence.

3184 because he did  
 not kill Cyrus;

Astriages caste hym to be wreke  
 On Arpagus be fals collusion,  
 Because that he his biddying dede breke,  
 And was contraire to his entencioun  
 Cirus to slen, ageyn[es] al resoun.  
 And for that cause Astriages, I reede,  
 Off Arpagus leet slen the child in deede.

3188

3192 so he slew  
 Harpagus' son  
 out of revenge,

3196

and had him  
roasted and  
served up to  
his father at  
table, a most  
lamentable  
thing to do.

This to seyne, be ful fals compassyng [p. 127] 3200  
And couert moordre, wrouht bi Astriages,  
The sone was slayn off Arpagus the kyng,  
And afftir rosted, alas, ful causeles,  
And sithe presentid, amongis al the pres, 3204  
Toforñ his fader, a thyng most lamentable,  
With Astriâges as he sat at\* table.

When Harpagus  
found out this  
horrible murder,  
he went home in  
a rage

But whan this kyng callid Arpagus  
Conceyued hath this moordre most terrible, 3208  
And how his sone & heir was slay[e]n thus,  
In his ire most furious and odible,  
In al the haste that it was possible,  
He is repaired hom to his houshold, 3212  
And al the cas to Cirus he hath told.

and told Cyrus  
what had hap-  
pened, urging  
him to take  
vengeance and  
telling him that  
he was the  
lawful heir to  
Astyages' king-  
dom, and how  
his grandfather  
had cast him  
out to be eaten  
by wild beasts.

And how his sone was slay[e]n for his sake,  
In the most hatful odious cruelte,  
Excityng hym with hym to vndirtake 3216  
On this fals moordre auengid for to be,  
To hym declaryng off trouthe & equite,  
How he was bor[e]n be discent in deede,  
As riht[e] heir to regne in Perse & Mede. 3220

To hym declaryng the stori bi and bi,  
First off the drem off Astriages,  
And how that he be fraude ful falsli  
Made his douhter, callid Mundanes, 3224  
Poorli be weddid onto Cambises,  
Which was his mooder, & how in tendre age  
He was out cast to beestis ful sauage.

All things that  
God disposes  
must come to  
pass; and Cyrus  
was preordained  
to become the  
ruler of all Asia.

Be a shepperde and a shepperdesse 3228  
Fostred he was in gret[e] pouerte,  
And brouht fro beestis out off wildirnesse,  
Because God wolde he sholde saued be:  
For thilke Lord, which euery-thing may see, 3232  
Whan that he hath a thyng aforñ disposid,  
Nedis it mut fall & may nat be deposid.

This said[e] Cirus, at his natyuyte,  
Ordeyned was be reuolucioun 3236  
Off the heuenli speeris, in noumbre thries thre,  
(So stood that tyme his constellacioun,)

3206. at] at the B, H 5, P.

3215. odious hatefull H. 3119. How] om. R 3, P.

3233. aforñ] be for H.



That he sholde haue the domynacioun  
 Ouer al Asie, be influence dyuyne,  
 Afor[n] figured be spredyng off the vyne.

3240

What may the fraude off sleihti folk auaille,  
 Innocentis to putte out off ther riht?  
 Thoun trouthe be hid amongis the poraile,  
 Hard brouht foorth, & dar nat shewe his liht,  
 Yit God will ordeyne that the bemys briht  
 Shal sum o day shewe out his cleernesse,  
 Maugre all tho that wolde his title oppresse.

3248

What can the  
 fraud of men  
 avail to rob  
 innocents of  
 their rights?

For this Cirus, as clerkis off hym write,  
 Was bi the title off his mooder side  
 Born to be kyng al Asie tenherite,  
 Al-be his aiel from hym wolde it deuide;  
 But God, that can for trouthe best prouide,  
 Hath for Cirus be processe so ordeyned,  
 That he off Asie the lordshep hath atteyned.

3252

Cyrus was born  
 to be king of  
 Asia, and in  
 spite of Asty-  
 ages, God's will  
 prevailed.

Cirus that tyme was growe up weel on lengthe,  
 Weel proporciownyd off membris & stature,  
 Wonder delyuer, & passyng off gret strengthe,  
 Straunge emprises proudli to endure;  
 And to iupart[e] & putte in auenture  
 His owne persone, the fame was off hym so,  
 Was non mor likli wher men sholde haue a-do.

3256

Cyrus grew up  
 into a strong,  
 well-built man

And bi the counsail off kyng Arpagus,  
 Whan this Cirus was weel waxe in age,  
 With Perciens proude & surquedous,  
 And Archanytes cruel off corage,  
 For to recure his rihtful heritage  
 Be go with Cirus, armed in plate & maile,  
 With Astriages to holden [a] bataile.

3260

3264

and by Har-  
 pagus' advice  
 set out to give  
 battle to Asty-  
 ages.

And he ageynward gan to taken heede,  
 And with hym took[e] many worthi knyht,  
 With al the puissaunce off the lond off Mede  
 Hath take the feeld the same dai foorth-ryht,  
 To disherite Cirus off his ryht.  
 But God and trouthe was atwen hem tweyne  
 Egal iuge ther quarel to dareyne.

3268

3272

3276

Astyages took  
 the field the  
 same day, with  
 all the power of  
 Media,

3241. spredyng] spryngyng H.  
 3256. up weel on] wele vpon H.  
 3259. Straunge] Strong H.  
 3269. a] om. J, P.

but Cyrus won, The feeld ordeyned, & splaid ther baneris,  
 On outhr parti ful prouddli on thei sette,  
 At thassemblyng lik liouns off ther cheris,  
 In the face as thei fersli mette 3280  
 With rounde speris, ful sharp[e] grounde & whette,  
 • Til that Cirus, off grace mor than noumbre,  
 Off his aiel the parti dede encoumbre.

and, pursuing his foes, took Asty-  
 ages prisoner. This myhti Cirus, this yonge champion, [p. 128] 3284  
 Thoruhout the feeld gan such a slauhtre make,  
 With his knyhtis as he wente up and down,  
 That as the deth his fomen hym forsake.  
 Astriages vnder his baner take, 3288  
 The feeld venquysshid, for al his fals veynglorie,  
 To shewe that riht hath alwey the victorie.

A man may  
 purpose a thing  
 of malice, but  
 it is God who  
 disposes, and  
 truth always  
 wins in the end. A man off malice may a thyng purpose  
 Bi a maner froward prouydence; 3292  
 But God a-boue can graciousli dispose  
 Ageyn such malice to make resistance:  
 Men for a while may suffre violence  
 And wronges grete, wher-so that thei weende, 3296  
 But trouthe alway venquysshith at the eende.

Astyages found  
 that his dream  
 came true: the  
 sleight of man  
 is no match for  
 God's power. Astriages fond ful sooth his drem;  
 Thouh he ageyn it made purueiance  
 To haue\* depryued Cirus off his rem, 3300  
 He was deceyued in his ordynance:  
 For wher that God thoruh his myhti puissance  
 List for heires iustli to prouide,  
 Sleichte in such cas off man, is leid a-side. 3304

So Cyrus re-  
 covered the land  
 of Media, and  
 all Asia rejoiced  
 in peace. Maugre the myht[e] off Astriages,  
 Cirus on hym made a disconfiture;  
 And al Asie reioisshed eek in pes,  
 Off verai riht, as was his auenture. 3308  
 And be iust tittle he dede also recure  
 The lond off Mede, lik as was his fate,  
 And into Perse he dede it hool translate.

He was not re-  
 vengeful, and  
 gave his grand-  
 father the fourth  
 part of Archania. Ageyn his aiel he was nat vengable, 3312  
 Which hadde wrouht to his destruccioun,  
 But was to hym benygne and merciabe,  
 And grauntid hym, off hool affeccioun,  
 The fourte part off the regioun 3316

3300. To haue] Ta B. 3315. graunted] growndid H.

Off Archanye, off which afor I tolde,  
Hym to sustenyn in his daies olde.

For kyng Cirus wold[e] nat his lyue  
Suffre his aiel, off veray gentillesse,  
That men sholde hym fynali depyue  
Off kyngli honour, for non onkynd[e]nesse, —  
To yeue exaample to pryncis in sothnesse,  
Thouh God ha[ue] youe hem power in erthe &  
myht,  
Thei sholde ay merci medle with the ryht.

nor did he wish  
him to be de-  
prived of kingly  
honour. Princes  
should always  
temper their  
justice with  
mercy.

3324

[¶ *Lenvoye.*]

**N**OBLE Princis, *your* eris doth encline,  
And considreth in *your* discreciouns,  
How dremys shewed binfluence dyuyne  
Be nat lik sweuenys, but lik auysiouns,  
Or resemblable to reuelaciouns,\*  
Which thouh men wolde distourbe & make faile,  
God wil nat suffre ther malice to preuaile.

Noble Princes,  
consider how  
dreams shewn  
by divine influ-  
ence are like  
revelations,  
which God will  
not allow men  
to frustrate.

3328

Astriages drempte he sauh a vyne,  
Shewed off trouthe and non illusiouns,  
From his douhter wombe, riht as lyne,  
Spred in Asie ouer the regions;  
But to disherite be fals collusiouns  
Yonge Cirus, the kyng dede his trauaile,  
But God nat suffred his malice to preuaile.

Astyages' dream  
came true in  
spite of all his  
efforts to  
disinherit  
Cyrus.

3332

Pryncis remembreth, ye that in honour shyne,  
Vpon this stori in your entenciouns,  
And beth weelwillid, wher God list forthre a lyne  
Outher to richesse or dominaciouns,  
To fauour them to ther\*promociouns, —  
Be nat contrarie in your acquitaile,  
Sithe God will suffre no malice to preuaile.

Princes, remem-  
ber this story;  
and when God is  
pleased to ad-  
vance a line to  
wealth or power  
do not oppose  
his will.

3340

3317. afor] tofor H.

3327. considre H.

3330. reuelaciouns] reuoluciouns B, J, P, R 3, reuolucyons H 5.

3331. distourbe] distrouble H, distrouble R 3.

3335. lyne] any lyne H.

3344. promyciouns H.

[How Candalus kyng of Lide was made Cokewold / and aftir slayn.]<sup>1</sup>

As Bochas sat  
writing in his  
study, Candaules,  
king of  
Lydia, came  
weeping into his  
presence and be-  
sought him to  
tell the story of  
how he was de-  
ceived and made  
a cuckold by  
Gyges, a knight  
of his household.

**W**HIL Iohn Bochas caste his look a-side,  
In his studie as he sat writyng, 3348  
To his presence cam the kyng off Lide  
Callid Can<sup>d</sup>alus, ful pitousli pleynyng,  
With salte teris ful lowli besechyng,  
That he wolde, tasswagen his greuauce, 3352  
His dedli sorwe to putte in remembraunce.  
His compleynt was most off onkynd[e]nesse,  
For fals deceit, ageyn al skile and riht,  
That wher his trust was most off gentillesse, 3356  
He mokkid was, for al his gret[e] myht;  
For off his hous ther was a certeyn knyht,  
Giges callid, thyng shamful to be told,  
To speke pleyn Inglissh, made hym a cokold. 3360

But I should not  
have used such  
a coarse word!  
I ought to have  
said he had a  
horn or that he  
was called Cor-  
nuto.

Alas, I was nat auysid weel befor,  
Oncun<sup>n</sup>yngli to speke such language;  
I sholde ha said, how that he hadde an horn,  
Or souht sum tee[r]me with a fair visage 3364  
Texcuse my rudnesse off this gret outrage,  
As in sum land Cornodo men them call,  
And summe afferme how such folk ha[ue] no gall.

It happened  
thus: One sum-  
mer day the  
queen lay  
naked on her  
bed,

This was the cas: whan Pheb<sup>u</sup>s shon [ful]  
sheene [p. 129] 3368  
The somer sesoun in his ascencioun,  
Whan soote braunchis wer clad in newe greene,  
Heete inportable hadde domynacioun,  
Whan that the queen for recreacioun, 3372  
Onprouyded that no man dede hir keepe,  
Vpon hir bed lay naked for to sleepe.

and, as scholars  
say, there was  
no fairer  
creature alive;

And, as clerkis off hir beute write,  
Ther was a-lyue no fairere creature, 3376  
Nor mor excellyng, lik as thei endite,  
Off semlynnesse, hir stori doth assure:

3350. Candaules P.

3356. That] Til H. 3359. be told] beholde<sup>r</sup>H.

3364. teerme] teeme J, P, term H, terme H 5, tym R 3.

3369. The] This H.

3377. lik] of looke H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 53 verso.

Callid for beute cosyn to Nature,  
And worthi eek, yiff I shal nat feyne,  
To be comparid to Griselde\* or Eleyne.

3380

Kynde in hir forge list nothyng to erre,  
Whan she hir wrouhte, bi gret auysynesse,  
To make off beute the veray lode-sterre,  
And yeue hir fauour, beute & semlynesse;  
But for Nature hadde so gret besynesse  
To fourme a woman that was so fressh of hewe,  
She hadde forgete for to make hir trewe.

3388

for nature  
did not blunder  
when she  
wrought her,  
except that she  
forgot to make  
her true.

Hir eyen wer verai celestiall;  
Hir her ontressid, lik Phebus in his speer, —  
A thyng rasemblyng that were inmortal,  
So angelik she was off look and cheer,  
An exaumpaire off port & off maneer, —  
Ther was no lak, sauf Nature, thoruh hir slouth,  
Hadde lefft behynde to yeue hir feith & trouthe.

3392

She had  
heavenly eyes,  
golden hair, an  
angelic face and  
unexampled  
manners; only  
nature neglected  
to give her  
constancy.

And on a day, as she lay slepyng  
Naked a-bedde, most goodli on to siht,  
Ful onwarli cam Candalus the kyng  
Into the chaumbre, wher Titan shon ful bryht,  
And shewed hir beute onto his owne knyht,  
Off entent he sholde ber witness  
How she excellid all othir in fairnesse.

3396

That day Can-  
daules shewed  
her to Gyges,  
so that he  
could see that  
she was more  
beautiful than  
all other women.

3400

And whan Giges gan in ordre see  
Off this queen the gret[e] excellence,  
He was enamoured vpon hir beute  
Al the while he stood ther in presence,  
Gan ymagyne a tresoun in silence,  
To slen his lord, withoute long tarieng,  
Wynne the queen, and afftir regne as kyng.

3404

But Gyges fell  
in love with her,  
and soon after  
killed the king  
and married her.

3408

This was the eende, doolful and pitous,  
To be remembrid hatful and terrible,  
Off this noble worthi Candalus;  
For off his trust to moche he was credible  
Onto Giges, the traitour most odible.  
And yit mor foltissch, wherbi he lost his liff,  
Outward to shewe the beute off his wiff.

3412

That was the  
end of Canda-  
ules, who was a  
credulous and  
stupid man.

3416

3381. Gresilde B, Grisilde J, P, Grisilde H, Grysilde R 3,  
Gresylde H 5.

3385. beute fauour J—beute] om. P. 3391. Immortal H.

3396. day] bedde H. 3400. his] hir H.



Alas that a  
queen or princess  
should do such  
a thing! Their  
only excuse is  
that Nature  
makes them  
double.

Thouh she were fair & goodli on to see,  
Ther was no trust nor no sekirnesse,  
For other hadde as good[e] part as he, —  
Giges koude bere theroff witnesse.  
Alas, a queen, or any gret pryncesse  
Assente sholde hir fame for to trouble,  
But yiff Nature excuse hem to be double.

3420

[How what thing kyng Midas touched was golde/  
yitt deied he in misery and wrecchidnesse.]<sup>1</sup>

Gyges was soon  
afterwards  
crowned king  
of Lydia.

**B**UT who-so-euer was therwith loth or fayn,  
Giges was afftir crownyd kyng off Lide,  
Whan that his lord was be tresour slayn.  
Off hym the surplus Bochas set a-side.

3424

Midas next  
appeared, and,  
weeping, told  
Bochas his  
complaint.

And in his studi, as he dede abide,  
Ther cam off Frige, Midas the riche kyng,  
Told myn auctour his compleynt with wepyng.

3428

Never was there  
a richer king.  
When he was  
born, ants laid  
grains of wheat  
about his cradle,

For ther was neuer, be conquest nor labour,  
No kyng aform that hadde mor richesse,  
Nor mor plente off gold nor off tresour.  
At whose berthe poetis thus expresse:

3432

A-boute his cradel amptis gan hem\* dresse,  
Whil he slepte, and gan a-boute hym leyn  
A ful gret noumbre off purid whiete greyn.

3436

and diviners  
came to  
the conclusion  
that he would  
excel all men in  
wealth.

Wherupon, most expert dyuynours,  
As thei took heed in ther attendaunce,  
Such as wer[e]n best expositours,  
Saide it was a tokne off habundaunce,  
To haue off richesse al maner suffisaunce,  
And concludyng, pleyntli gan to tell,  
How he alle other in tresour sholde excell.

3440

3444

It was also said  
that Bacchus  
granted his  
request, that  
whatever he  
touched would  
turn to gold.

Poetis off hym wrot that werg ful olde,  
How Bachus gaff hym — the myhti God of wyn, —  
What he toucheth shal turnen into golde  
As good as that which cam out off the myn,  
At all assaies to been as pur and fyn.  
This request, as writ Ouidius,  
Was onto Midas grauntid off Bachus.

3448

3435. hem] hym B. 3437. A] om. H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 53 verso.



He thouhte gold myhte hym most auaile: [p. 130] 3452 But as he could  
 What he handlid was gold with touchyng, not eat gold,  
 But whan hunger his stomak gan assaile, when he became  
 His bred, his mete was cleer gold in shewyng; hungry he  
 And whan he gan to faile off his fedyng, begged Bacchus  
 And fond in gold no recour to escape, to help him,  
 Besouhte Bachus sum remedi to shape. 3456

Bachus bad hym go bathe in a ryuer and, following  
 To wasshe a-way the colour aureat, Bacchus's  
 Wher yit is shewed the goldi grauel cleer. 3460 advice,  
 Which example declareth to ech estat, bathed in a  
 That gold alone maketh men nat fortunat: river. The  
 For what may gold or tresour ther auaile, gravel still  
 Wher men in hunger fynde no vitaile? 3464 shines golden  
 there.

Or what is worth\* gold, perle or stonys red, This only proves  
 Grene emeraudis or saphir[e]s ynde, that a barley  
 Whan men enfamyned ha[ue] no[u]ther greyn nor loaf is some-  
 bred, 3468 times worth  
 Nor in such myscheeff vitaile may non fynde more than  
 For to fostre ther nature and ther kynde, — all worldly  
 A barli loff in such a distresse riches,  
 Mor myhte auaile than al worldli richesse! 3472

This knew Midas, & was expert in deede, as Midas learned  
 Thouh he off gold hadde so gret plente, by experience.  
 That with metall he myhte hymself nat feede.  
 Which caused hym off necessite 3476  
 To considre and cleerli for to see,  
 That bred mor vailith for fostryng off nature,  
 Than al [the] richesse that men may heer recure.

For which this kyng gan haten al richesse; 3480 As a result he  
 Gold and tresour he hadde eek in disdeyn, began to hate  
 Leffte his crowne and his roial noblesse, all wealth, left  
 And ches to keepe sheep vpon a pleyn. his throne and  
 Al worldli worshepe was to hym but veyn. 3484 became a  
 Off malencolie & froward pouerte, shepherd.  
 Endid his liff in gret aduersite.

3454. gan] did H.

3458. shape] make H.

3461. yit] it P.

3466. worth] worthi B, J, worthy H, H 5.

3478. availith H.

3479. the] om. J, P, H 5 — heer] om. H.

3484. was] is H.

His end was  
very terrible, for  
in his great need  
he drank the  
blood of a mad-  
dened bull, and  
became mad  
himself and died.

For off ire and inpacience,  
Fynally thus with hym it stood:  
Furiousli in his gret indigence,  
As writ Bochas, how he drank the blood  
Off a bole, sauagyne and wood,  
With loue enchaufid,\* made no delaies,  
Most bestiali eendid thus his daies.

3488

3492

[Off Balthasar kyng of Babilone and how Danyel  
expowned, Mane, Techel, Phares.]<sup>1</sup>

Belshazzar mis-  
used the sacred  
vessels of the  
temple in Jeru-  
salem,

**N**EXT to Bochas, or that he was war,  
As he sat writyng with ful gret labour,  
Off Babilon cam grete Baltazar  
To declare his sorwe and his langour.  
Which had mysusid ful falsli the tresour  
And the vesseles brouht fro Ierusalem,  
In Babilon cheeff cite off his rewrm.

3496

3500

drinking  
wine out of them  
at a supper, sur-  
rounded by his  
concubines and  
magicians,

For at a souper with his lordis all,  
Whan off the vesselis he drank myhti wyne,  
And solemply sat in his roial stall,  
And round a-boute all his concubynes,  
Philisophres, magiciens and dyuynes,  
Ther cam an hand, the Bible doth assure,  
And on the wall gan writen this scripture:

3504

when suddenly  
a hand wrote  
*Mane, Techel,  
Phares* in bright  
letters on the  
wall.

**Mane techel phares** wreten in his siht,  
Thouh he the menyng conceyued neueradeel,  
Which on the wall shewed cleer & briht,  
Fro whos sentence auailed non appel.  
But the prophete, hooli Danyel,  
Fulli expownd to Baltazar the kyng  
The mysterie off this derk writyng.

3508

3512

3487. Impacience H.

3488. with hym thus H.

3492. enchaufid] eschaufid B, eschaufed J, R 3.

3501. a] om. H.

3503. solempnely H, R 3, solemnely P.

3510. cleer] fayre P.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J leaf 54 recto.

"This woord **Mane**, pleyntli and nat tarie,  
 In Latyn tunge betokneth in substaunce,  
 The daies countid & rekned the noumbrarie  
 Off thi regnyng & off thi gret substaunce.  
 And **Techel** sowneth a weieng in ballaunce,  
 In tokne thi power & kyngdam be mesure,  
 God hath hem peised, thei shal no while endure.

The prophet  
 Daniel explained  
 3516 to him that  
*Mane* meant in  
 Latin,  
 "thy days are  
 numbered."  
*Techel*, "thy  
 3520 power and king-  
 dom are weighed  
 in the balance."

**Phares** also betokneth a brekyng,  
 In Romain tunge, into pecis smale;  
 For thi power & froward rebellyng  
 Shal from an hih be brouht into the vale,  
 This Hooli Writ & no feyned tale:  
 For whan pryncis wil nat ther liff redresse,  
 God will onwarli ther surquedie represse.

"*Phares*  
 means a break-  
 ing into small  
 3524 pieces; for thy  
 power shall be  
 brought low.  
 This is Holy  
 Writ and no  
 tale. You were  
 warned long ago  
 by the fall of  
 3528 Nebuchadnezzar  
 and you took no  
 heed. Now it  
 is your turn to  
 be brought low."

Thou wer be toknys warned longe affor,  
 Be many exa<sup>m</sup>ple, the story ye may reede,  
 Bi the fallyng off Nabugodonosor,  
 And thou theroff took ful litil heede,  
 The Lord to thanke & haue his name in dreede.  
 For which thou shalt withynne a litil throwe  
 Lese sceptre & crowne, & be brouht ful lowe."

3532

[*Lenvoye.*]<sup>1</sup>

¶ Lat pryncis all this story haue in mynde, [p. 131] 3536  
 And for themsilff[e] notabli prouide,  
 A[nd] namli thei that be to God onkynde,  
 Ther concubynes for to sette a-side,  
 And make vertu for to been ther guide,  
 Voide lecheri and fals presumpcioun,  
 Which haue\* so many brouht to destruccioun.

3540

Nabugodonosor hadde repentaunce,  
 And was restorid to his possessiouns;  
 But God off riht took sodenli vengauce  
 On Balthasar for his transgressiouns.  
 Wherefore, ye Pryncis, disposith your resouns,

Nebuchadnezzar  
 repented, and  
 3544 was restored to  
 his throne; but  
 God took ven-  
 geance on Bel-  
 shazzar.

3517. & rekned] *om.* H, R 3, P.

3519. a weieng] a weyen H.

3520. kyngdam &amp; power H.

3525. hih] hiht H — an hih] the hye P.

3526. This is J, R 3, P.

3529. before H.

3542. haue] han B.

<sup>1</sup> No heading in MSS. or P. The Envoy is indicated by an initial.

Afftir your meritis to ha[ue] God merciabie, 3548  
For your demeritis to fynden hym vengable.

Wherefore, Prin-  
ces, do not quar-  
rel with the  
churche as Bel-  
shazzar did, who  
drank wine out  
of the holy ves-  
sels and lost  
both his lordship  
and his life.

Geyn hooli churche taketh no quarelis,  
But aduertisith in your inward siht;  
For Balthasar drank off tho vesselis 3552  
Stole fro the temple off verrai force & myht:  
He los̄te lordshepe and liff vpon a nyht,  
So that the kyngdam off Assiriens  
Translatid was to Mede & Persiens. 3556

[How\* Cresus & balthasar were venquissed bi  
Cirus and the son of Cresus slayn at huntyng of  
a boor.]<sup>1</sup>

Bochas next saw  
Cresus, who  
besought him to  
tell the story of  
his fall.

**N**EXT to Iohn Bochas, withynne a litil throwe,  
Wrytyng off princis many pitous fate,  
He sauh kyng Cresus, with other on þe rowe,  
Lowli besechyng his fallyng to translate; 3560  
And how Fortune ageyn hym gan debate,  
And off his myscheeff, doolful for to reede,  
For to descryue anon he gan procede.

He was king of  
Lydia and of  
many other  
kingdoms, and  
called the flower  
of all chivalry.

For as it is remembrid in wrytyng, 3564  
As God and Kynde list for hym ordeyne,  
Off Lide he was gouernour & kyng,  
And lordshep hadde, the story cannat feyne,  
Off many kyngdam mo than oon or tweyne; 3568  
Fame in that tyme so dede hym magnefie,  
That he was callid flour off al cheualrie.

Warlike and  
abounding in  
riches, with  
plenty of  
soldiers and  
many children,

And he was also in his tyme founde  
The most expert in werre & in bataile, 3572  
And off richesse was the most habounde,  
And most excellyng in conquest to preuaile —  
Plente off peeple, with roial apparaile,  
And with al this, to his gret auantage, 3576  
Noumbre off childre tenbelish̄ his lynage.

nothing failed  
him, until he  
dreamt that his  
son Atys was  
slain,

In the most hiest off his roial see,  
And al was weel & nothyng stood amys,  
Yit tamenuse his felicite, 3580  
A drem he hadde; & trewli that was thys,

3564. in] by H.

3567, 68 are transposed in H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 54 verso. How] Lo J.

How that his sone, which callid was Athys,  
Was take fro hym, & be mortal outrage  
Slayn sodenli in his tendre age.

3584

This woful drem dede hym gret distresse  
And putte his herte in ful gret disespeir,  
Stondyng in feer & in gret heuynesse  
Because his child, tendre, yong & fair,  
Which that was bor[e]n for to been his hair,  
Sholde causeles in such[e] myscheeff die,  
So as his drem afforn dede specefie.

which put him  
in great despair.

3588

Off this processe to declare moor,  
How Cresus drem fulfellig was in deede:  
From Olympus ther cam a wilde boor,  
Most furious & sauagyne off dreede,  
With fomy tussches, which faste gan hym speede, 3592  
Doun descendyng, & nowher list abide  
Til that he cam into the land off Lide,

3592 A wild boar  
came down from  
Mt. Olympus  
into Lydia

And gan destroye ther fruitis & ther vynes,  
Wher-euer he cam in any maner place,  
Brak the nettis and the stronge lynes  
Off the hunteris, that dede at hym enchace;  
But vnder support off the kynges grace,  
His sone and heir, off whom I spak tofor,  
Gat hym licence to huntun at this boor.

and began to  
destroy the  
3600 crops and defied  
the skill of the  
hunters,

3604

His fader Cresus deemyng off this cas,  
Ther was no cause off dreed in no maner,  
Thouh his sone wer present at the chas  
With other hunteris such game for to ler:  
But ay Fortune with hir double cheer  
Is reedi euere bi sum fatal treyne  
At such disportis sum myscheeff to ordeyne.

whom Atys  
joined with his  
father's per-  
mission. But  
3608 Fortune is  
always ready to  
make mischief.

3612

For oon ther was which hadde gouernaunce  
Vpon this child tawaiten and to see,  
Chacyng the boor, to saue hym fro myschaunce,  
From al damage and aduersite, —  
Which many lusti folk off that contre,  
With hornys, houndis & sharp speris grounde,  
Sekyng the boor til thei han hym founde.

One of the  
child's tutors, in  
the excitement  
of the chase,

3616

3587. ful gret H.

3615. Chacyng] causyng H.

3618. speris] swerdes H.



threw his spear  
so wildly that it  
missed the boar  
and struck Atys,  
piercing his  
heart.

And as thei gan fersli this boor enchace, [p. 132] 3620  
He that was chargid to been the childis guide,  
As with his spere he gan the boor manace,  
The hed nat entred, but forbi gan to glide,  
And on the child, which that stood beside, 3624  
The strook alihte, & or he dede aduerte,  
The speris hed rooff hym thoruh the herte.

When Cræsus  
heard about it,  
his face looked  
like that of a  
dead image for  
grief.

But off this child, when the deth was kouth,  
Told & reportid hooli the manere 3628  
How he was slay[e]n in his tendre youth,  
Born to been heir onto his fader deere,  
Cresus for sorwe chaunged\* look & cheere,  
And for constreynt off dool, in his visage 3632  
He resemblde a verrai ded ymage.

But in time all  
sorrows assuage;

But eueri sorwe, be long continuance,  
At the laste it sumwhat must aswage;  
For ther is noon so furious greuance, 3636  
Nor so mortal importable rage,  
But long processe yeueth hym auantage:  
I meene as thus, ther is noon so gret a sorwe,  
But it muste cese, outhere eue or morwe. 3640

for, as philoso-  
phers know,  
things that are  
violent may not  
be eternal;

Philosophres concluden & discernen,  
And bi ther resouns recorden in scripture,  
Thyng violent may nat been eterne;  
Nat in o poynt a-bit noon auenture, 3644  
Nor a sorwe alway may nat endure:  
For stound[e]meel thoruh Fortunys variaunce  
Ther folweth ioie afftir gret greuance.

and, as there  
was no means of  
remedying the  
cause of Cræsus'  
grief, Bochas  
wrote no more  
about it and  
proceeded to tell  
of his fall,

The sorwe off Cresus, thouh it wer intollerable, 3648  
And at his herte the greuance sat ful sore,  
Sith that his dool was irrecoverable,  
And mene was non his harmys to restore,  
Myn auctour Bochas writ off his wo no more, 3652  
But off his fall, how that it fill in deede,  
To telle the maner forth he doth proceede.

saying that first  
Belshazzar, who  
had been joined  
by Cræsus, and  
then Cræsus  
himself was  
overcome by  
Cyrus,

And for a while he set his stile a-side,  
And his processe in parti he forbar 3656  
To speke off Cresus, that was kyng off Lide,  
And gan resorte to write off Balthazar,  
Ageyn rehersyng: or that he was war,

3626. thoruh] to H, P. 3631. he chaunged B.  
3645. may nat alwey H.



How myhti Cirus, off fatal auenture,  
Made on hym proudli a disconfiture.

3660

And as it is put in remembraunce,  
Off Balthazar to holde up the partie,  
Cresus with hym had maad an alliaunce  
With al his puissaunce & al his cheualrie,  
His liff, his tresour to putte in iupartie,  
Sworn in armis as brother onto brother,  
Be Cirus venquysshed, the ton afftir the tother.

3664

in spite of  
Cræsus'  
bravery.  
Cræsus was  
put in prison

3668

Ther bothe myscheeff no lenger was delaied,  
Al-be that Cresus fauht longe in his diffence,  
He fynali be Cirus was outraid  
And depryued be knyhtli violence, —  
Take in the feeld, ther was no resistence,  
And rigorousli, to his confusioun,  
With myhti fetris cast in a derk prisoun.

3672

And mor tencrece his gret aduersite,  
A sone off his, tendre & yong off age,  
That was dounb from his natyuyte  
And neuer spak woord in no maner language —  
Cirus comaundyng be furious outrage,  
That Cresus sholde, be vengable cruelte,  
Ba knyht of Perse in prisoun heuedid be, —

3676

together with  
one of his sons  
who was dumb.  
Cyrus com-  
manded a  
knight to cut off  
Cræsus' head;  
but, as he raised  
his sword, the  
dumb child  
spoke and told  
him not to slay  
a helpless king.

3680

And with his suerd as he gan manace,  
Cresus taslayn withoute al reuerence,  
The dounb[e] child, ther present in the place,  
Which neuer had spoke, thus saide in audience:  
"Withdrauh thi strok and do no violence  
Onto my lord, thi fame for to confounde,  
To slen a kyng that lith in prisoun bounde."

3684

The knyht astonyd, hath his strok forborn,  
Gretli abaued in that derk habitacle,  
Which herd a child that neuer spak toforn  
A-geyn his suerd to maken an obstacle:  
Ran & tolde this merueilous myracle  
To myhti Cirus, with eueri circumstaunce,  
Hoppyng therbi tattermrid his greuaunce.

3688

3692

At this the  
knight was so  
abashed that he  
ran and told  
Cyrus.

3696

3660. fatal] hatefull H.

3677. yong &amp; tendre H. 3686. thus] &amp; H.

3691. abaued] abasshid H, abashede R 3, abashed P.

But it is very  
hard to appease  
the malice of a  
tyrant,

But wher-as tirantis be set on cruelte,  
Ther crokid malice ful hard is to appese,  
So indurat is ther iniquite,  
That al in vengauce is set ther hertis ese, 3700  
Themsilff reioisshyng to seen folk in disese,  
Lich as thei wer, in ther froward daunger  
Clenli frauçhised fro God and his power.

and cruel Cyrus  
had a fire made  
and commanded  
his men to throw  
Croesus into it.

This cruel Cirus, most vengable off desir,[p. 133] 3704  
Texecute his fel entent in deede,  
Leet make in haste off faget a gret fir,  
And gan them kyndle with many colis rede,  
And made Cresus, quakyng in his dreede, 3708  
For to be take wher-as he lay ful lowe,  
And bad men sholde into the fir hym throwe.

However,  
Jupiter saw what  
was happening  
and sent a storm  
of rain, which  
extinguished the  
fire, and Croesus  
escaped with  
his life.

But Iubiter, which hath this vengauce seyn,  
How cruel Cirus with malice was atteynt, 3712  
From heuene sente a tempest & a reyn,  
That sodenli the horrible fir was queynt;  
[And] woful Cresus, with dreedful fir maad feynt,  
Escapid is his furious mortal peyne — 3716  
God and Fortune for hym list so ordeyne.

Cyrus then be-  
gan to have pity  
and allowed  
Croesus to go  
back to Lydia,  
but no longer to  
be called king.

This auenture, in maner merueilous,  
The herte off Cirus gan sumwhat to enbrace,  
And caused hym for to been pitous 3720  
Ageyn Cresus, & grauntid hym this grace,  
To ocupie, whil he hath liff and space,  
The lond off Lide; except onli this thyng,  
He sholde nat afftir no mor be callid kyng. 3724

Thus the king-  
dom of Lydia  
came to an end.  
Now I will pass  
on to Cyrus.

And thus off Lide the kyngdam dede fyne,  
Which took his gynnyng off oon Ardisius,  
And endured the space off kynges nyne; — 3728  
Look who will, the bookis telle thus.  
Heroff no mor, but forth onto Cirus  
I will proceede, with al my wise\* cure  
For to translate his woful auenture.

3697. as] om. H. 3706. fagott H.  
3715. And] om. J.  
3730. wise] vise B.

[How the cruel tiraunt Cirus delited euer in slauhtre  
& shedyng of blood and so ended.]<sup>1</sup>

- H** EIR be discent to gret Astriages,  
 Poorli brouht forth, as maad is menciou<sup>n</sup>,  
 And hadde al Asie to his gret ences,  
 Holdyng that regne be iust successioun  
 In long quiete withoute rebellioun,  
 Til tyme he thouhte, in ful froward wise,  
 The world was smal to staunche his couetise.
- He hadde an etik most contagious  
 Fretyng vpon hym for desir off good,  
 A dropesie, hatful and furious,  
 Off froward rage, that made his herte wood,  
 A woluysch thrust to sheede manys blood,  
 Which ouerthwertid, be fals malencolie,  
 His roial corage into tirannye.
- But whan he gan presumptuousli entende  
 To robbe and reue folk thoruh his pillage,  
 God & Fortune made hym to descende  
 Ful sodenli from his roial stage,  
 Demyng off pride it was a gret vauntage  
 To wynne londis, off verray force & myht,  
 Thouh in his conquest ther wer no tittle off ryht.
- To will he gaff hooli the souerynte,  
 And aduertisid nothyng to resoun,  
 But preferrid his sensualite  
 To haue lordshep & domynacioun  
 A-boue sad trouthe and discrecioun.  
 Which causith pryncis from ther estat roiall,  
 Or thei be war, to haue a sodeyn fall.
- For the lordshepe off al Asia  
 Miht nat suffise to Cirus gredynesse,  
 But thouhte he wolde conquere Cithia,  
 And ther werreie tencrece his gret richesse,  
 Thouh he no tittle hadde off rihtwisnesse,  
 Sauff a fals-lust; wheroff men sholde ha[ue] routhe,  
 That will in pryncis sholde oppresse trouthe.

3732 Unfortunate in  
 his youth, he  
 subsequently  
 held all Asia  
 under his do-  
 minion;

3736

3740 but he suffered  
 from a fever of  
 bloodthirstiness  
 that turned his  
 royalty into  
 tyranny.

3744

3748 And when he  
 began to rob  
 and pillage,  
 thinking in  
 his pride that  
 might was above  
 right, God made  
 him descend  
 very suddenly  
 from his throne.

3752

He gave free  
 rein to his will  
 and preferred  
 worldly success  
 to discretion.

3756

3760 The lordship of  
 all Asia was not  
 enough for him,  
 so he thought  
 he would con-  
 quer Scythia.

3764

3733. forth] vp H. 3735. that] þe H.  
 3741. hatful] ful hatful H.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 55 recto.

Excelling all-  
other princes in  
conquest and  
treasure, he was  
cruel and  
avaricious,

First this Cirus all pryncis dede excell  
Bothe in conquest, victorie and bataile,  
Off gold & tresour, as bookis off hym tell:  
Kyngdamys to wynne he dede most preuaile;  
And yit too vici dede his herte assaile,  
\* First couetise euere tencrece in good,  
With a desir to sheede mennys blood.

3768

3772

and, carried away  
by these vices, he  
marched on the  
kingdom of  
Queen Tomyris,  
which lies be-  
tween the Cas-  
pian and the  
Black Sea, and  
where the peas-  
ants have only  
fruits of the soil  
to eat.

With these too vices he brenneth euer in oon,  
That neuer myhte from his herte twynne,  
Made a gret arme toward Sceptemtrion,  
And cast hym proudli to sette on & begynne,  
Scithia, the myhti lond, to wynne,  
Queen Thamaris ther regnyng, as I fynde,  
Whos kyngdam ioyneth to Ethiope and \* Inde.

3776

3780

Toward the parti which is orientall,  
The Se off Surrie floweth ful plenteuous  
Doun to the Se callid Occidentall,  
And southward renneth toward Coucasus.  
And folk off Cithie that been laborious,  
Which tile the lond, hanat to ther lyuynge  
But onli fruitis which from the erthe sprynge.

3784

But the land is  
rich in grain and  
gold and precious  
stones, although  
part of it is not  
inhabited for fear  
of griffons.

The lond off Cithie is riche for the nonys, [p. 134]  
For greyn and fruit a lond ful couenable,  
Riche off gold, perle and precious stonys,  
Riht comodious & wonder delectable;  
But a gret parti is nat habitable,  
The peple dreedful to beelde ther mansiouns,  
For feer off deth, because off the griffouns.

3788

3792

Tomyris was not  
very famous  
before Cyrus  
began his in-  
vasion,

The noble fame nor the hih renoun  
Was nat ferr knowe nor Isprad a-boute  
Off Thamaris, queen off that regioun,  
Nor off hir noblesse, withynne nor withoute,  
Till that kyng Cirus, with a ful gret route,  
Into Scithia gan hym proudli dresse,  
The hardi queen to spoile off hir richesse.

3796

3800

but she started  
at once to pre-  
pare to resist  
him and en-  
trusted one third  
of her forces to  
her son,

But she, hir fame mor to magnefie,  
Gan in gret haste with ful riche apparaile  
Ful prudentli assemble hir cheualrie,  
And took a feeld, yiff he hir wolde assaile,

3804

3780. kyngdam] contre H — and] in B, J, R 3, P.  
3784. Coucasus J, H, cancasus R 3, Caucasus P.  
3790. perle] perell R 3. 3791. delitable H.

Redi with hym to haue[n] a bataile.  
And off hir meyne, lich as seith my book,  
Onto hir sone the thridde part she took.

3808

And gaff hym charge in the same place,  
Hymself tacquite that day lik a knyht,  
And for to meete Cirus in the face,  
And nothyng dreede with hym for to fyht.  
But whan kyng Cirus off hym hadde a syht,  
Cast hym that day the yong[e] prynce [t]opprese,  
Rather be wilis than manhod or prowesse.

3812

telling him to  
have no fear. \  
Cyrus however  
laid a trap for  
him, leaving his  
tents filled with  
food and drink  
and apparently  
fleeing with his  
army.

First he leet stuffe his large pauilloun  
With gret plente off drynkis delectable,  
Duyers metis and confeccioun  
Round aboute vpon eueri table;  
And in his menyng passyng deceyuable,  
Lich as he hadde in maner dreedful be,  
Took al his hoost & gan anon to fle.

3816

3820

This yonge prynce, off menyng innocent,  
Nothyng demyng as be supposaile,  
But that Cirus was with his me[y]ne went  
And fledde for feer, he durste hym nat assaile.  
And whan he fond such plente off vittaile,  
He & his knyhtis thoruh mysgouernaunce,  
To ete & drynke set al ther plesaunce.

3824

The young  
prince and his  
knights thought  
that Cyrus was  
afraid, and  
stuffed them-  
selves and  
guzzled until  
they were drunk  
and incapable,

3828

Thei hadde off knyhtod lost al the disciplyne,  
Forsook[e] Mars and put hym out off siht,  
And to Bachus ther hedis gan enclyne,  
Gorge vpon gorge till it drouh to nyht.  
And proude Cirus cam on hem anon riht  
With al his hoost, thei out off ther armure,  
On bestial folk made a disconfiture.

3832

at which Cyrus  
came down on  
them and killed  
them all: for, as  
wise men say,  
there is no re-  
sistance in  
drunken folk.

3836

Cruel Cirus lefte non a-lyue,  
Off hih nor low made non excepcioun,  
Thei wer to feeble ageyn his myht to stryue:  
For cheeff cause off ther destruccioun  
Was dronkenesse, which voideth al resoun;  
And wise men rehersen in sentence,  
Wher folk be dronke ther is no resistance.

3840

3814. toppresse] oppresse J.

3834. on] vpon H.



When this  
massacre was  
reported to  
Tomyris, she  
almost went mad  
with rage,

And whan this slaughtre be relacioun  
Reported was and brouht to the presence  
Off Thamaris, queen off that regioun,  
Onto hir herte it dede ful gret offence.  
But off ire and gret inpacience,  
Seyng hir sone slayn in tendre age,  
For sôrwe almost she fill into a rage.

3844

3848

but showing no  
sign of womanly  
weakness  
resolved to be  
revenged on  
Cyrus.

But for al hir woful dedli peyne,  
She shewed no tokne off femynyte,  
But off prudence hir wepyng gan restreyne,  
And caste hir pleynli auengid for to be  
Vpon kyng Cirus & on his cruelte.  
Sente out meyne tesprien his passage,  
Yiff she hym myhte fynde at a-vauntage.

3852

3856

So she feigned  
a flight with  
her army into  
the mountains,  
Cyrus pursuing  
to take her  
among the rocks;

And with hir meyne gan feyne a maner fliht  
Vp to the mounteyns, dreedful & terrible;  
And Cirus afftir gan haste hym anon riht,  
In hope to take hir, yiff it wer possible.  
Among which hilles, mor than it is credible,  
Been craggi roches, most hidous off entaile,  
Pereilous off passage & void off al vitaile.

3860

3864

but having no  
guide or drag-  
oman and no  
supplies, his men  
fell into disorder  
and all were  
slain.

And Cirus ther fill in gret daunger,  
Al onpurueied off drogeman or guide;  
To fostre his peeples vitaile was non ther,  
Erryng as beestis vpon eueri side.  
And thei off Scithie gan for hym so prouide,  
Wheroff ther queen[e], God wot, was ful fayn,  
At gret myscheeff that al his men wer slayn.

3868

His torn and  
pierced body was  
brought to the  
queen,

Non off alle was take to ransoun, [p. 135]  
Nor he hymself escapid nat ther boundis,  
Such wait was leid to his destruccioun.  
And he thoruh perced with many mortal woundis,  
On pecis rent, as beris been with houndis,  
The queen comaundyng, whan he lay thus totorn,  
To hir presence his\* bodi to be born.

3872

3876

who first had his  
head cut off and  
then threw it  
into a bath-tub  
full of blood  
and said:

First she hath chargid to smyte off his hed,  
Whan she thus hath the victorie off hym wonne.  
And in a bath, that was off blood al red,

3880

3845. to] vn to H.

3866. drougeman H — or] or of J. P.

3869. so for hym H, so for hem R 3 — so] om. P.

3870. ther] the H. 3874. Such] om. H.

3878. his] this B and MSS. except Add. which has his.



She gan it throwe, withynne a litil tonne.  
And off despiht riht thus she hath begonne,  
Most tirantli in hir woful rage,  
To dede Cirus to hauen this language:

3884

"O thou Cirus, that whilom wer so wood  
And so thrustleuh in thi tirannye,  
Ageyn Nature to sheede manys blood,  
So woluyssh was thyn hatful dropisie,  
That merci non myhte it modifie,  
Thyn etik ioyned, gredi and onstable,  
With thrust off slauhtre ay to be vengable!"

3892

It is an horroure in maner for to thynke  
So gret a prynce rebuked for to be  
Off a woman, manys blood to drynke,  
For to disclaundre his roiall maieste.  
But gladli euer vengable cruelte  
Off riht requereth, with onwar violence  
Blood shad for blood iustli to recompence.

3896

"O thou Cyrus,  
once so eager  
in thy tyranny  
to shed men's  
blood, so wolfish  
in thy hateful  
craving that  
was tempered by  
no mercy."

It is horrible to  
think that such  
a great prince  
was rebuked by  
a woman and  
compelled to  
drink blood; but  
it was neverthe-  
less a woman  
who brought  
him to his end.

¶ Off myhti Cirus thymperial noblesse  
Was bi a woman venquysshid & bor down;  
God made hir chastise his furious woodnesse,  
And for toppresse his famous hih renoun:  
For wher vengauunce hath dominacioun  
In worldli pryncis, pleyntli to deuyse,  
With onwar strok God can hem weel chastise.

3900

The eende off Cirus can ber ful weel record,  
How God withstondith folk that be vengable;  
Lordshepe & mercy, whan thei been at discord,  
Riht wil nat suffre ther staat to stonde stable.  
And for this Cirus was so onmerciable,  
He with onmerci punshed was in deede:  
Deth quit for deth; loo, heer his fynal meede!

3908

When lordship  
and mercy are  
at discord in  
princes, God  
will punish  
them.

In slauhtre & blood he dede hym most delite;  
For in tho twayne was his repast in deede.  
He fond no mercy his vengauunce to respite  
Wher he fond mater any blood to sheede,  
Such ioie he hadde be deth to see folk bleede;  
And for the siht dede hym so mekil good,  
His fatal eende was for to swymme in blood.

3912

Cyrus delighted  
in slaughter; he  
knew no mercy,  
but at the end  
he himself swam  
in blood.

3916

3920

3888. to] so to J — manys] meynys H.

3912. punysshid H.

There were no  
funereal fires at  
his burial, no  
golden tomb  
was ordained  
for his shrine;

Loo, heer thexequies off this myhti kyng!  
Loo, heer the eende off his estat roiall! —  
Ther wer no flawmys nor brondis cleer shynyng  
To brenne his bodi with fires funerall,  
Nor obseruaunces nor offrynges marciall,  
Nor tumbe off gold with stonys riche & fyne  
Was non ordeyned that day to make his shryne!

3924

he had no  
epitaph, no bells  
were rung; no  
weepers sobbed  
out tragedies;  
no one was there  
but his enemies,  
who threw his  
carrion out to  
wild beasts.

Epitaphie ther was non rad nor sunge  
Be no poete with ther poetries,  
Nor off his tryumphes ther was\* no belle runge,  
Nor no weperis with sobbyng tragedies,—  
Non attendaunce, but off his enmyes,  
Which off hatrede in ther cruel rage  
Cast out his kareyn to beestis most sauage.

3928

3932

Thus end  
tyrants.

Loo, heer off Cirus the fynal auenture,  
Which off al Asie was whilom emperour!  
Now lith he abiect, withoute sepulture,  
Off hih ne low he fond no bet fauour.  
Loo, heer the fyn off al worldli labour,  
Namli off tirantis, which list nat God to dreede,  
But set ther lust in slauhtre, & blood to sheede!

3936

3940

## ¶ Lenvoye.

Noble Princes,  
consider the  
lamentable  
death of Cyrus.

**R**YHT noble Princis, considreth in your siht  
The fyn off Cirus, pitous & lamentable,  
How God punsheth off equite & riht  
Tirantis echon, cruel and vengable:  
For in his siht it is abhomynable,  
That a prynce, as philisophres write,  
In slauhtre off men sholde hymselff delite.

3944

3948

He was a  
manly knight  
until tyranny  
entered his  
heart and he  
began to delight  
in slaughtre.

This said[e] Cirus was a ful manli knyht,  
In his begynnyng riht famous & notable,  
Nature gaff hym semlynnesse & myht;  
For in conquest was non seyn mor hable,  
Till tyrannye, the serpent deceyuable,  
Merciles his corage dede atwite,  
In slauhtre off men whan he hym gan delite.

3952

3927. ordeyned] redy H. 3930. was] nas B, J.

3935. fynal] fatall H.

3944. punysshith H, punyshith R 3, punisheth P, punshith J.

Wherefore, ye Princis, remembreth day &  
nyht

[p. 136] 3956

Tafforce your noblesse & make it perdurable;  
To gete you fauour & loue off euery wyht,  
Which shal your statis conserue & keepe stable:  
For ther is conquest non so honourable  
In gouernauce, as vengauce to respite,  
Merci preferringyng, in slaughtre nat delite.

3960

Wherefore,  
Princis, re-  
member that no  
conquest is  
so honourable as  
that which pre-  
fers mercy to  
vengeance.

[How Amilius for couetise slouh his brothir and  
Remus and Romulus norissed by a woluesse.]<sup>1</sup>

**A**FFTIR kyng Cirus, Bochas dede espie  
Too worthi brethre, with facis [ful] pitous, 3964  
Born be discent to regne in Albanye,  
Bothe off o fadir, the story tellith vs.  
The ton off hem callid Amylius,  
And to remembre the name [eek] off the tother, 3968  
Muniter Icallid was his brother.

After Cyrus,  
two brothers,  
Amilius and  
Numitor,  
appeared to  
Bochas.

Thei hadde a fader, which named was Prochas,  
Kyng off that lond, the story doth deuyse.  
Afftir whos deth[e], pleyntli this the cas,  
Amilius for fals[e] couetise  
His brother slouh in ful cruel wise,  
That he oniustli, be fals[e] tyrannye,  
Miht ha[ue] the kyngdam alone off Albanye.

3972

Their father was  
called Procas,  
and on his  
death Amilius  
slew his brother,  
that he  
might be sole  
possessor of the  
kingdom

3976

This Albania be descripcioun,  
Lik as Bochas affermeth in certeyn,  
Ys a cite nat ferr fro Rome toun,  
Set on an hill beside a large pleyn,  
The beeldyng statli, riche and weel beseyn,  
Stronge Iwallid, with many riche tour,  
And Ascanius was first theroff foundour.

3980

of Alba Longa,  
a city not far  
from Rome,  
which had been  
founded by  
Ascanius and  
was named after  
its whiteness.

Which callid was in his fundacioun  
Albania, for the gret whihtnesse;  
Ther kynges afftir be successioun  
Named Albanoyes, princis off gret noblesse.  
And be discent, the story berth witnesse,  
Fro kyng Prochas, record on bookis olde,  
Cam these too brethre, & Rea, ther suster, tolde.

3984

3988

3964. ful] om. J, P.

3969. Numitor P — his brother] the tothir H.

3970. Procas P. 3977. Albanye H, Albany R 3, P.

3982. wallid H. 3985. Albany H, Albania J, R 3.

<sup>1</sup> MS. J. leaf 56 verso.

Æmilius had a  
sister, Rhea,  
whom he  
compelled,  
when very  
young, to  
become a nun  
in the Temple  
of Vesta,

Muniter slayn, as maad is menciou, n,  
The kyngdam ocupied be Amilius;  
And Reā entred into relegioun,  
For to be wympled in that hooli hous  
Sacred to Vesta, with virgynys glorious,  
Ther for tapide and be contemptatiff,  
With othre maidnes, duryng al hir liff.

• 3992

3996

so that neither  
she nor her de-  
scendants should  
have any claim  
to the kingdom.

And this was doon whil she was yong off age  
Bi hir brother, off fals entencioun,  
That she sholde ha[ue] no maner heritage,  
Nor cleyme no title in that regioun  
Off hir kynreede be non occasioun,  
But stonde professid to virgynyte  
Tofor Vesta, and lyue in chastite.

4000

4004

Yet in spite of  
her virginal  
chastity, a  
miracle came to  
pass, and she  
conceived  
against Nature  
(who is helpless  
in such cases),  
and bore two  
sons.

Yit natwithstandyng hir virgynal clenness,  
She hath conceyued be natural miracle;  
Gan to encrece in hir hoolynesse,  
Whos wombe aroos, in Kynde was noon obstacle:  
Ageyn such bollyng auaieth no triacle;  
But the goddesse for hir so dede ordeyne,  
That she attonys hadde sonys tweyne.

4008

Although she  
was high  
priestess, her  
brother cast the  
two infants out  
to wild beasts.

The temple off Vesta stood in wildirnesse,  
Wher Rea hadde hooli the gouernaunce  
Off preestli honour doon to the goddesse,  
With many straunge vnkouth obseruaunce.  
But bi hir brothris mortal ordenaunce,  
Hir yonge sonys myhte nat be socourid,  
But cast out to beestis to\* be deuourid.

4012

4016

They were  
rescued and  
fostered by a  
she-wolf, for,  
as Holy Writ  
says, God can  
keep children  
from all harm.

But a she-wolff, which whelpid hadde late,  
To yeue hem souke dede hir besynesse,  
Be God ordeyned, or be sum heuenli fate,  
Them to conserue fro deth in ther distresse.  
For Hooli Writ pleynli ber[i]th witnesse,  
God can diffende, as it is weel kouth,  
Childre fro myscheeff in ther tendre youth.

4020

4024

Æmilius was  
furious with his  
sister and shut  
her up in a  
prison, where she  
died of grief.

But in this while this said Amilius,  
That was ther vncl, as maad is menciou, n,  
Ageyn his suster froward & furious,  
Made hir be shet in a ful derk presoun;

4028

And ther compleynnyng the destruccioun  
Off hir too childre born to hir repreeff,  
For veray sorwe deied at gret myscheeff.

4032

These said[e] childre, deuoid off al refut,  
Beside a ryuer lay pitousli crieng,  
From al socour naked & destitut,  
Except a woluesse vpon hem awaityng,  
At whos wombe ful stille thei lay sowkyng,  
Onto Nature a thyng contrarious,  
Childre to souke off beestis rauynous.

4036

The children  
lay crying beside  
a river, with no  
one but the  
wolves to take  
care of them;

But he, this Lord off eueri creature, [p. 137]  
Riht as hym list[e] can bothe saue & spille;  
And beestis which be rage off ther nature,  
He can adaunt\* & make hem li ful stille, —  
Tigres, leouns obeien at his wille.  
The same Lord hath maad a fell woluesse  
Onto twei childre hir bigges for to dresse.

4040

but God, who  
can save or  
destroy as he  
wills and is  
obeyed even  
by lions and  
tigers, saw  
that they  
came to no  
harm,

And whil this woluesse hadde hem in depos,  
Ther cam an heerde callid Faustus, —  
Beheeld ther sowkyng & sauh hem lyn ful clos;  
Which shepperde was off kyng Amilius,  
Cauht up these childre, the story tellith thus,  
And brouht hem hom with ful gret dilligence  
Onto his wiff, that callid was Laurence.

4048

and they were  
found by a shep-  
herd, who took  
them home to  
his wife.

And she for loue dede hir besi peyne  
Them to fostre till thei cam to age,  
Gaff them sowken off hir brestis tweyne  
Fro day to day, off herte and hool corage.  
And thei wer callid as in that language,  
Afftir the story, the ton off hem Remus,  
And the seconde was named Romulus.

4052

4056

Laurence was  
her name, and  
she cared for  
them until they  
grew up. One  
was called  
Remus and the  
other Romulus.

Off which[e] brethre, brefli to termyne,  
The toun off Rome took his origynall.  
Off fals disclaundre first began that lyne,  
The roote out souht, ful vicious founde att all,  
Cleerli remembred for a memoriall,  
Ther gynnynge greuh off such incontinence  
As clerkis call *incestus* in sentence.

4060

4064

They were the  
founders of  
Rome, and their  
line began with  
scandal and  
incest,

4040. this] bat is R 3, that P.

4043. adaunt] aduerte B, J, aduert P.

4046. Onto twei] To too H — twei] tweyn H 5, tweine P —  
bigges] pappes R 3.

4052. hom] vp H, forth J — ful] om. J.